

075: How to Get Booked and Paid to Speak: Interview with Grant Baldwin

J Grant Baldwin, welcome to the show.

G It is an honor to be here with you Dr. Jeffrey Goins.

J It is an honor to have you be here with me.

G You know, I've got to just jump right in here, because I was watching Sports Center yesterday, and there was a baseball player with your last name. And I swear the announcer's tried it so many different ways—

J Of course they did.

G —on how to pronounce it. And I was like, "I think it's Goins." I remember one time you said it rhymes with coins. And every time I've heard someone say otherwise, I try to correct them and try to help the people. But I don't know. Whatever you want to go with is fine.

J Thank you for being my ambassador of Goins. I appreciate it.

G [Laughing].

J You know what I tell people is that it actually gains a syllable when it passes the Mason-Dixon Line. You should be acquainted with the Mason-Dixon Line, because you used to live in Missouri.

G Which is technically your fault that I'm here.

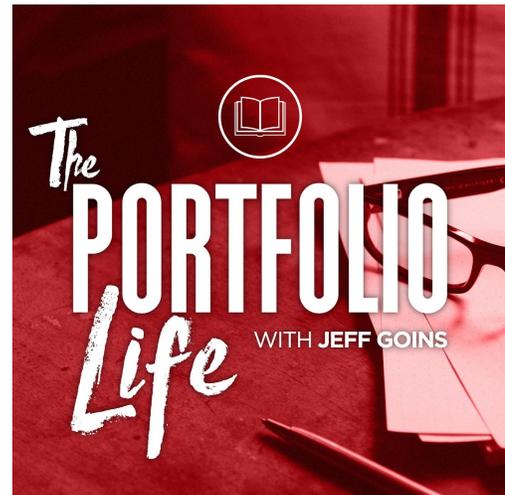
J Yeah. Are you from Missouri? I can't remember.

G Yeah, born and raised there. And, then, yeah, moved here about six months ago thanks to you.

J We broke – and here is Nashville. We broke up the Baldwin clan, then, the generations-old Missouri line is what you're telling me. I mean there's mountain people in the mountains of Missouri that are just have it out for me probably.

G There's maybe like farmland somewhere that is due to us. But we'll never see it now. We were taken out of wills everywhere, because – all because of you.

J Awesome, great. Well, glad – I've got to be proud of something. But, yeah, it's interesting about my name since this is all about me and not about you. My dad's parents are from Alabama. And



my dad and all his brothers and sisters grew up in Chicago. So, his parents are from Alabama. They moved all their kids up to Chicago. All of their kids were raised talking like Yankees and have these thick Chicago accents. And they all said “Gōins.” And, then, my dad moved the family back down to Alabama several years ago. And I was just after college. And, then, I moved up to Tennessee right after that. And when we moved back down, all of my dad’s aunts, uncles, and cousins say “Gō-ins.” And, so, it’s kind of like when people – I don’t correct people, because it’s kind of whatever suits your fancy. But it evolves depending on geography, I think.

G I think that makes total sense now that you put it that way. It’s very logical and rational.

J But as for me and my house, we’re going to go by Gōins. So, Grant, we just finished The Tribe Conference, and you were the closing speaker for that. You wrapped it up. And I just have to tell you it wasn’t very good [laughing].

G I did my best. I felt like it was a D+ at best.

J Yeah, I agree with that assessment.

G But like, you know what? That’s Jeff. So, let’s just wing it, and we’ll see what happens. And, yeah D+ came out.

J Yeah. You closed it marvelously. Everybody was coming up and saying, “This was perfect.” And you killed it. I mean it was an incredible speech. And you and I have been friends for a while, but I’d never seen you speak. I knew that you spoke. So, I figured, “Yeah, he could probably handle this.” But I didn’t know. And I have to tell you—

G That’s the best thing about being a speaker it’s like, it’s hard to prove. I remember hearing it’s like someone saying, “I can play the harp.” Well, it’s like you can’t really prove that right now.

J [Laughing].

G Nobody has a harp lying around. It’s like, “Well, I have an audience. Come speak to them.” So, you know? People don’t know if you’re a good speaker or not. So, it always helps them when someone is like, “Oh, I actually saw you, and you didn’t suck.” So, it kind of validates everything that you’ve been telling me.

J Yeah, well, I can vouch for that. You did not suck. You were great. You were probably – and I’m not blowing smoke – one of the best speakers I’ve ever seen live that I actually knew that was from Missouri and didn’t have hair. So, I mean, that’s a very—

G A very specific niche. But I’m proud to be near the top of that list.

J Yeah, I mean, I would say like top 40th percentile for sure.

G I’ll take that. If I can get a plaque or something I can hang in my office, that is something I’m going to continue to wear proudly.

J What I think made you so great is you came up as a speaker through the school of hard knocks. Like I'm a lazy speaker, because I speak to adults. But for years you've been speaking to kids: to teenagers, youth, these huge events where if you just kind of drag it out a little too long, or you're not funny, I mean they're disengaged. And that's one of the things I appreciated about you on stage. I mean it was – you were delivering content, but you were doing it in such an engaging way. Do you think speaking for youth for years forced you to get better than you would otherwise?

G Yeah, I definitely think it helps, because you're right. You know right away with teenagers if it's working or not. Because it's not like – adults, they'll be polite and smile and nod, and they'll pat you on the back.

J Sure.

G And tell you that you did a good job if you suck. But with – yeah, with 17-year-olds they – if they're not interested, they will gladly fall asleep in the middle of your talk. So, definitely. Like there's not only, I think, speaking to that type of audience, but speaking in a lot of different settings and situations. People ask a lot, "How do you become a better speaker?" You just do it a lot. How do you become better writing? There's no magic trick. There's no book that you can read that all of a sudden, you're going to become a better writer. You just have to do it. So, being in lots of different venues, and settings, and situations, being in a huge gymnasium with a 2,000 students on a day when the air conditioning is out, and the mike's not really working that forces you to become a better speaker. You really got to figure it out. Yeah, so some of that trial by fire definitely helps improve.

J I remember talking to my friend, Jeremy, who I think had like four or five kids at the time. He has more now. And I was about to – we were about to have Aidan, our son. And I asked him – we're meeting for coffee, and I was like, "What are your quick-and-dirty tips for being a better dad? Can I just write them down?" And he said – and he was trying to – he was writing a lot. And, so, I was trying to give him tips on writing. He was trying to give me tips on dadhood. And he says, "You become a better dad – you become a dad really the same way that you become a writer by doing it. There's no way to – no book that you read or" –that's all good, but you really don't become that thing until you start doing it and acting like it. And I feel the same way about speaking. In many ways I still feel like a novice. I'm trying to get better and better. But I am like super lazy about practice, and about honing this skill, because, yes, you can stand in your boxer shorts in your bedroom and talk to your mirror or something and practice that way. But, really, I feel like with speaking it's kind of like musical performance. You get better, I think, just by getting a lot of gigs and forcing yourself up on stage. That forces you to prepare better, practice better, and as you know stuff just happens live that you can't prepare or rehearse for. And, so, I think you get much, much better the more gigs that you book. Has that been your experience?

G Yeah, yeah. I would say the practice, preparation part is still really important. But nothing compares to actually getting on stage. So, for example, at Tribe Writers I did about a 30-minute talk or so. And I didn't – I don't go up there with any notes or anything. And I want to know my content well enough that I can go up there, and I can deliver it, and it's practiced, it's rehearsed. But it's not like

scripted or verbatim where you feel like – sometimes you see speakers, and you’re so deep in your own head that you’re not even aware of what’s going on in the audience.

Or like something happens, and it throws them off. They’re just flabbergasted. But I don’t know how to get back on track there. So, I want to be the type of speaker that I really know my content well and know where I’m going. But I’m also like really fully present. I’m really just aware of things that happen in the audience, or I can make adjustments on the fly. But I’m with you. But sometimes some of my best material, some of my best lines, or best punchlines, or stories, or jokes, or bits or whatever are things that wasn’t rehearsed, or wasn’t planned. It just happened. You said something like, “That was gold. Make sure I do that next time.” So, there’s nothing that compares to getting in front of a live audience.

Because even when you’re preparing a talk, when you’re practicing, when you’re writing the material out, and you’re kind of getting a sense of what I’m talking about, where I want to go, what stories I want to tell it’s all theory until you get on the stage. Like, “I think this is funny.” But you don’t know if it’s funny until you’re in front of live people. They’ll tell you whether or not it’s funny. And I think this will have this emotional response from people. But you just don’t know until you’re up there in the moment. So, yeah, it’s great to – I spend a lot of time pacing my office, and pacing hotel rooms not necessarily in my boxer shorts, but I do spend plenty of time talking to myself, practicing, but nothing compares to actually being in front of that live office.

J So, that’s how the pros do it. They don’t just speak in their underwear. Maybe I got that wrong. Because people said, “If you’re nervous, then you just imagine yourself in your underwear.” I probably got that wrong. But I feel more comfortable when I’m not wearing pants.

G That’s good to know. I think you should lead with that clip in this episode.

J Like every event planner listening to this is going, “I thought maybe I might book Jeff at some point, but not anymore.”

G Listen, if you put that one line at the opening of the show, “I feel more comfortable when I’m not wearing pants,” people are like, “I got to keep listening. Where is this going?” So, yeah. Tease that out.

J Yeah, with our podcast we do the little, doo, doo, joo. Then there’s like the little clip. So, we’ll just put that right at the beginning. So, people go, “All right. I’m engaged.”

G I listen. I know how it works. That’s why I pulled it out.

J So, you – I want to talk more about preparation, because you walked up to the stage, you and I met backstage. And you had a little piece of paper. You had some little notes. But I don’t remember you ever looking at those. Talk to me about that. So, you’ve – preparation, practice are very important. I totally get that. And think in many ways the practice prepares you for that spontaneity. Like if you don’t know your stuff, you can’t really – you can’t take that joke a little bit further or take

that story a little bit further, because you don't know your content well enough. But you had something written down, but I don't remember you ever looking at it. What was that about?

G You need to know everything that is in my pocket.

J [Laughing]

G Yeah, and everybody's process and approach is going to be different. So, where I would start and to back all the way out is, whenever I'm working on a talk I will actually manuscript it out of how I actually want to say it. Because it helps me to just kind of think through. Because if I said, "Hey, Jeff, tell me about the time when you met Ashley, whenever you got engaged." Like you could tell me that story, and it's not like, "Well, crap, I don't have my slide deck. So, I can't tell you the story. Let me get my notes." You lived it. You can tell that. But how you might tell it might be different if I really sat down and thought about it, and thought about all the details, and parts to the story, and punchlines, or anything that I want to – I could really make that story really, really good versus just telling it on the fly, off the cuff. So, I want to manuscript out. But, again, I'm not doing it for the sake of, "I need to know every single line of what I say next." I just want to have an idea of where is this talk going just kind of laying it out. From that point I'll spend a lot of time kind of practicing it, rehearsing it. And, again, I'm not trying to memorize it verbatim.

I think that's one thing that a lot of speakers forget is, let's say someone is singing *The National Anthem* at the beginning of a sporting event or something, some type of event, if you mess up, everybody knows it. But as a speaker, if you mess up, if I say, "Here are three points, and you do them out of order," nobody knows. There is no – there is like no lyrics, there's no script. Everybody else is following. "Oh, he said this line. He was supposed to say that line." Nobody has any idea if you messed up. So, I think that's why it's important to just kind of know your content, but then get out of your head. Just present the material, deliver the material.

So, I will spend some time going over that just trying to internalize it, trying to learn it. But, then, on that like at The Tribe Writers I had just a notecard, just a little 3 x 5 index card there. And all I had was like key words, like trigger words for me just trying to remember—OK, so, for example, Jeff, you open with a story about Superman. So, instead of like writing out five sentences to make sure you get all these key points, all you would write would be Superman. And like that's just a trigger word. Like, "OK, I'm going into the Superman story. I know that story well enough that all I need to know is that's what's happening next."

So, for me, on that index card it's really about a dozen words or so of, "This word, and, then, this word, and, then, this word, and then this." And that's just enough for me. So, I'm not holding like the full manuscript as much as I'm just kind of thinking through, "OK, so, after I do that bit, then there's this story." So, for example, let me think back through to it. So, we talked about the conference or we talked about the story of moving to Nashville. We talked about the conference itself. We talked about business, and I think there is one other thing I'm missing. But I mean we're talking about four or five words. Well, that's the first like 10 minutes, you know? Four or five words. And those are the things I'm looking for, just a little trigger words that can help me move into the next possible piece there.

So, that's really what I'm doing backstage is I'm just going over those trigger words, just making sure I've got that order down and making sure I know what piece comes next.

J So, I feel like we got a little bit ahead of ourselves. I think that we even did this at the conference. We asked a group of writers, and content creators if they wanted to speak for a living. And I was surprised at how many people raised their hands. I mean it was over half the room for sure. And I remember getting started as a writer thinking to myself, "Well, if I'm going to make any money doing this, I'm probably going to have to speak." Because I heard Dan Miller once say, "Writers need to speak, and speakers need to write. Writers need to get up on stages to sell their books, and speakers need to have books in the back of the room to sell." It's just sort of a practical way to make a living with your message. And it just makes sense, because you know this. If you're speaking to a bunch of audiences, people want to continue that conversation. And a book is one of the ways that you can continue that conversation.

You – for the past however many years, you can fill this in for me – have been making a living as a full-time speaker. So, first of all, I'd love to have you speak to the possibility of that. Is that actually possible? And, then, second, what are some of the 1st steps that someone can take if they want to go down that road?

G Yeah, so, I've been doing this full-time for about seven or eight years now. I travel all over the country and speak about – last year we spoke at 67 events. This year we'll probably – we're definitely cutting back. But part of the challenge of speaking is, it doesn't scale real well. So, we're doing other things that can kind of help build the business in other ways. But, yeah, you're exactly right that a lot of writers want to speak. A lot of speakers want to write. So, there's a good symbiotic relationship there between both parties and what it is they want to do.

Even as a speaker I wouldn't consider myself necessarily a writer or an author. But I have a self-published book which sold over 30,000 physical copies of. So, not – yeah, not .pdfs, and not Kindle versions, but speaking is a – and I would say 95% of those book sales has come as a result of speaking. Like somebody saw me. They liked it. And they line up to buy a book. And, so, it is a great, great way as an additional not only revenue stream but also a great way to further your message out there. But the reality is like speaking is fun, but I gave a presentation a couple of days ago, and I'm having trouble remembering what I talked about at your event.

J [Laughing].

G You know what I mean?

J Right.

G So, if there is a book, "Now I've got something that I can really dig into and digest," then sometimes it's easier for it to sink in and spur the material and the content which are wanting someone, the action you're wanting someone to take, to actually go a little bit further beyond just hearing it. So, books are great for that.

So, what some of those early steps are is, yes, to answer the other question is, it's absolutely possible to make a full-time living doing writing, or speaking, or ideally a combination of both. The nice thing, too, is you get to decide what that looks like. You know, like I said, I spoke at 67 events last year. I know a lot of people that are like, "I would love to speak at five."

Jeff, you're a great example of this. You don't want to speak at 67. But you'd love to do five or 10, and that's a great fit for you and what it is that you're trying to do. So, I've met – I was talking with a mutual friend of ours who said they used to do 200-plus events a year. I was like, "That's insane! That's crazy!" But to each their own. Like you get to decide what speaking looks like for you. So, let's say you're like, "OK, Grant, I have some ideas of what it is that I want to talk about and kind of maybe what some of my material would be. There is three really foundational questions that you want to answer.

And, Jeff, I think you and I are going to be doing a training on this pretty, pretty soon. I threw in two pretties there. That's how pretty it's going to be.

J It's pretty, pretty.

G Pretty, pretty training. So, people are not going to want to miss that. But a couple of the pieces we're going to be talking about we'll start to talk a little bit about here is you need to answer three foundational questions as a speaker.

So, one, is why is it that you want to speak? Again, speaking is kind of one of those sexy, glamorous interesting types of things that people want to do. They just don't really know how to get into it. And more importantly they just don't know why they want to do it. So, how is speaking contributing to the bigger business and picture of whatever it is that you're trying to accomplish?

The second thing is, who is it that you want to speak to? In an ideal world if you could talk to anybody, it could be maybe you want to talk to moms. Maybe you want to talk to teenagers. Maybe you want to talk to business owners. Maybe you want to talk to authors. Maybe you want to talk to cat lovers. It could be anybody. But getting really, really clear on who it is that you want to speak to.

And, then, the last question, number three, is what is it that you want to speak about? So, you can't be someone who, "Well, I can talk about anything. I can talk to whomever about whatever." No, you can't. You've got to get really, really clear on this is who I talk to. This is what I talk about. And, Jeff, even when you and I talked you could have pitched a bunch of different ideas like, "Grant, can you talk about publishing?" I was like, "Uh." I mean I've self-published a book. So, I could give you a couple of thoughts on it. But I'm probably not the best to do that. "How about this? This is something I know well. This is something I can do really, really well and give a great presentation on. So, let's go down this path."

So, just being really clear as a speaker, same as a writer, if you say whether you have a book, or a blog, if you say, "Well, my book is for everybody." "Well, what section in Barnes and Noble does it fit in?" "Well, like it could go in any of them." Well, they're not going to carry it, and it's not going to sell.

You've got to get really, really clear on whom you want to speak to, and what is it that you want to speak about?

J Love that. So, I wanted to start speaking years ago. And I had just kind of started my blog. And I'd heard people talk about speaking, and I saw people doing it. I was like, "It can't be that hard. I could do this."

G If that joker can do it.

J And to be fair, I had had a bunch of experience in college as both a stage actor and, also, as a public debater. I was part of this literary society, and we did a lot of debates and stuff. So, I had some experience. But I wanted to get back into it. And I felt really rusty. And I was talking to Michael Hyatt about this. And I said, "What do you need to do if you want to be a speaker?" He's like, "Just put up a speaker page on your blog. And start calling yourself a speaker. And get a few gigs, and people will book you, because people want to book people that are already getting booked." And, so, I had to find a free local gig. And I recorded it and put it on my Website. And sure enough some people started contacting me. And I started getting booked to speak. And I was kind of blown away by the magic of that.

Can you talk a little bit about how you get started? Because I think that this is something that I think people struggle with this. Because I had to do quite a bit of free gigs just to kind of get myself out there. And your whole thing is, you can actually make a legitimate living doing this, but it does require hard work and hustle, but it is possible. And, so, I get clear what my message is, who I want to talk to, even kind of where I want to start speaking. How do I get the phone to ring? What does that even look like?

G Yeah, let's talk about that first point that you mentioned, because I think that's important and something people miss is, people won't know that you're a speaker if you don't tell them you're a speaker [laughing].

J Right, right.

G Like it's something so simple and basic. For example, last year I wanted to start doing some coaching. I don't really do any anymore. But it was amazing. I put up a coaching page, and I mentioned on my podcast a time or two that I'm a coach. And people started asking if I could coach them. Like it's amazing! If you let someone know, "This is what I do." But if I don't know that you're a speaker, why would I consider booking you?

So, I think you made a great point there that there's two key marketing tools that people need in the beginning. And you don't need to spend a lot, if any, money on these to get these up and running. One is a Website. You have to have a Website. It's basically you're modern-day business card. And, so, if you don't have a Website people don't take you seriously. They want to be able to go look at something.

And, number two, is you need to have that demo video. So, like you said, “You went and did a one, or a couple of speaking gigs, just to get some footage, just to be able to – it’s almost like, Jeff, one of your books, if you told people that, “Hey, I’m a great writer and just trust me on this.” And even if you’ve got some people that would say you’re a great writer, but if at the end of the day, “I just want to read your book.” I want to decide for myself. I don’t need you to tell me that you’re an amazing author or writer. I want to see it for myself. Same thing with speaking.

You and I have a relationship. So, you felt a little more confident in bringing me in. But at the end of the day if I don’t know you, maybe you are a great speaker. You’re just not what we’re looking for, or the style, or whatever. So, you want that demo video which is basically like two, three, four minutes or so. Think about like a movie trailer. I’m just trying to give someone just kind of an idea of, “OK, so, this is what it would be like.” Can I stand to watch another 30-45 minutes of this? You want to put your best two or three minutes of material in that demo video just to give someone a little taste of what that’s like.

Now, to speak to that, I think there’s a lot of people, “Grant, Jeff, what if I don’t have any footage?” You can speak at some local free events. That’s what you did in the beginning. My very first demo video was me speaking at a local church youth group of about 50 people. And I had a tripod with a little handy cam set up on the side. Audio was bad. The acoustics were bad. The lighting was horrible. I edited the video myself using Windows Movie Maker which was horrible.

J [Laughing]

G And, you know? That’s what I had in the beginning. I did it with excellence. I worked with what I had. It wasn’t like this professional three-camera HD shoot. It was just that’s what I had, a little tripod handy cam on the side of the room. And that worked. And I’ve been able to upgrade my demo video multiple times since then. And today we have some really good footage. But that’s not what I had in the beginning. Work with what you got, and improve as you go.

So, you could get a Website, a Square Space, a WordPress, like a decent theme. Get a good just a couple-page Website up and running as well as your demo video, and you can start booking speaking engagements with those two pieces alone.

J So, I get the video. I get the Website. And I know we’re going to do a whole workshop on this and you’re going to get into more of the nitty gritty, but I think this is fascinating just how to actually get started. And when I started I thought there was this – I had this expectation that I would just do things, and the phone would start ringing. And it surprised me when I realized even speakers that were making a full-time living; they were still doing free gigs to get on bigger stages, to get in front of people. They were still chasing better opportunities and they didn’t get to this point where they’re just “The Man,” or “The Woman,” and everybody just throws money at them. They were still having to hustle.

The other thing that was surprising to me, and I don’t know if this aligns with your experience, Grant, is how many gigs were booked not by waiting for somebody to randomly come to your Website and say, “Oh, you’re a speaker. I want to book you.” But those speakers, especially they were doing it for

themselves, or somebody was working with them, but they weren't part of some big bureau or whatever, those speakers were going out and they were hunting down leads. And this is what a bureau does for you, too. They're hunting down leads. And, then, they're bringing them back to your Website. And I was just in awe of how much work it was. I said I wanted to do this, but really I just wanted people to come ask me to speak and not have to work for it.

So, when you put the Website up, and when you put the video on there, what happens next? Do people just start coming? Do you have to go find them? What does that process look like?

G Yeah, you're so right there. Again, it's kind of like a blog. If you build it, they will come. And that doesn't work. Like there are a lot of other speakers. There's a lot of other blogs. There's a lot of other books. So, yeah, one of the simplest ways to attract attention is just to go out and find existing events and conferences that are already used to booking a speaker. That's one of the great things about when you're talking with an existing conference or an event, you're not trying to convince them to book a speaker. They're going to book a speaker either way. I'm just showing them that, "Hey, I am an option. I think I'm a pretty decent option for your event." And, Jeff, do you remember how you booked me? Do you remember how that came to be?

J How I booked you? We had lunch. Oh, did you ask? I can't remember?

G I just asked.

J [Laughing]

G Like it's not difficult. Like I remember you posted about it. And I think I just sent you a text. I was like, "Hey, you need a speaker, let me know?" I could have just been like, "I hope he asks me. I hope he asks me." I was like, "Maybe he would have thought of me, but maybe not until I asked." And you know what? If you would have said, "No." OK. It's not a big deal. But you don't get it unless you ask. You know? I'm speaking at FinCon where you keynoted last year. I'll be keynoting that this year. Why? Because I did a free event last year, free session last year. It went really well. I talked to the organizer, our mutual friend, and pitched him on an idea. I asked for it. So, there are so many of these types of events that how do you get – especially in the beginning. The longer you do it, the more you can build up a name, and kind of reputation. You can get a lot of word-of-mouth. But a lot of in the beginning is just going out and hustling and asking. So, that is – like there is no secret sauce. I think I'm a pretty decent speaker, but I think the reason that I've been able to build a full-time career for a speaker for the past seven-eight years have 500-paid speaking engagement is because I find the events, and I ask them. And sometimes they say yes, and sometimes they say no. But you don't know unless you ask. I can promise you if I just sat back and waited on people to come to me, I would have never built any career as a speaker at all.

J Love that. So, what did that look like for you when you were getting started? So, you do the church thing. You get the best video you can which is not very good. But you put it on a Website or something. And, then, did you just start calling up conferences? What did you do?

G No, calling sounds horrible.

J [Laughing]

G Cold calling sounds miserable. Yeah. So, in fact on the training that you and I are doing together, I'll talk a lot more in-depth about this. I'll show some exact examples of how I would find it and reach out, what I would say, what I wouldn't say. But the nutshell is, think of it like you are asking someone out for a first date. You're not like I didn't find – imagine like the first time you saw Ashley. It's not like, "Hey, my name is Jeff. We can just get married right now? Let me tell you like 94 things that are great about me." You're not doing that. I'm just trying to build a rapport with this person. I'm just trying to build any connection.

So, I think that's the mistake a lot of speakers make is, I've got my Website. I've got my demo. I know who I want to speak to, I know what I want to talk about. I start Googling. I find the perfect event. I find this great event for me. So, I send like this 98-paragraph email about why I'm awesome. And you should book me. And even whenever I talk to you it was like, "Hey, I saw you're doing this conference. You're doing this for authors, writers, and for your tribe. So, here's a topic, or here's another idea. If that works, cool. If not, no big deal." It's not like this thing like, "Hey, hey, Jeff. You should have me speak. I want to send you a 45-minute video, and you should watch the whole thing and tell me what you" – No, don't do that. You're building this rapport, building this connection with this person.

And I think at the end of the day I think one of the things that's easy to overlook and forget is people do business with people they know, like, and trust. This is a relationship business. So, why is it that you allowed me to speak at your event and do like a closing keynote? Because we had a relationship. Because you trusted me. If you had no idea who I was, you would have never put me in that spot. And, so, we have to – it's important to build that relationship.

And one of the things that's important to remind ourselves about relationships is relationships take time. You and I met a little over a year ago or so. And I bet at that point whenever we talked, you probably have been like, "Yeah, I might have you on a panel or something. But I'm not necessarily trusting you to get up and do a closing keynote." But the longer you build that rapport, that relationship with that person, the more likely you would want to book them.

So, that's one of the things I always try to remind myself is, don't go after gigs. Go after relationships. Build longterm relationships with people so that you're not just looking for a bunch of these one-off gigs.

J Yeah, I love that. Don't go after gigs. Go after relationships. And I also think it's worth nothing that we didn't have you on stage just because you're my friend. Because there are lots of friends that I have that probably would have loved to speak on that stage and friends who would I couldn't care less about. But I asked you to speak because, yes, we're friends and that's sort of the initial trust building factor. And, then, I just knew that you'd been doing it for a long time. I had a pretty good hunch even though I'd never seen you speak. I'd seen video clips and stuff. So, I was kind of familiar

with your work. But I had a hunch because you've spoken in front of thousands of kids before that you had to be on, because I knew that industry.

And, then, lastly, you were doing stuff. I keynoted at this even last year. You're doing it this year. And, so, I was like, yeah, you have to be – you've got to be kind of legit to do that. Because I saw you were doing other stuff, like I said before, I think a lot of times event planners want to book speakers who are getting booked. Nobody wants, even your friends I don't think want, to be your first gig. "Oh, I really want to do a favor for you." They've got more to worry about than just helping out their friend by putting them on stage. They've got 100s and sometimes 1,000s of people in the audience that they've got to connect with. And the speakers that vehicle for that.

So, because of all of those things, really because I knew that you were competent, I couldn't trust that you would do a good job without completely knowing what you would do. And I think that's really important. Because I think people sometimes hear the relationship side and go, "Oh, I'm not friends with so and so. Therefore, I'm not going to get invited." And what I love about you is you're not waiting to become friends with people before things happen. You're reaching out to people. The first time we met you told me about how that day or earlier that week you had a meeting with Dave Ramsey, because you just consistently reached out to him on Twitter. And he wasn't your friend. Your parents didn't go to high school together or something. But you put yourself in the right place and reached out and built a relationship.

And I think that's what's so fun for me, and I've learned this from you, Grant, is relationship is not as hard as we think. It takes time and tenacity, and perseverance, but if you don't have a relationship with somebody, if you're not connected with a tribe, or a group of influencers over there, you have more control over that than you might think. And I think you demonstrate that really well.

G Well, thank you. I appreciate that. And to speak to that, and I think that's a great point that last year when you and I first met in person it wasn't like we sat down and you're like, "Hey, Grant. I know we just met. I'm thinking about doing this Tribe Writers' Conference. It wasn't even on the radar.

J No, because I hadn't planned it yet. That was still about 12 months away from planning.

G A ways away. Yeah. So, that's where it's like, again, build relationships with people. So, there is a lot of people that I connect with now that they don't have an event on the calendar. There's nothing coming up. There's no gig in my near future with them. I just want to build relationships with people, because it's better for business longterm, and it's the right thing to do. If I was just using our friendship just to, hopefully, someday Jeff has an event and he books me. And, then, I'm just using you. And, then, word travels on that. You're able to turn to the people, "Yeah, I did work with Grant. And you know what? He was a great speaker, but he was a pain in the butt to work with. And I wouldn't recommend him." You want to be as good offstage as you're onstage. Again, that comes back to people do business with people they know, like, and trust. It's a human business. It's not like this overcomplicated thing. So, yeah, that's why it's so important to build those relationships now.

J So, before we wrap up, because one of the things I love to talking about on *The Portfolio Life* is how you don't just do one thing. For the past seven years, Grant, you've been a speaker. But you have also become an author. And you're running an online business now. You teach an online course. You're diversifying your portfolio of work. Talk to me a little bit about that. Why are you doing that? Why did you write the book? Why are doing online courses? Why are you still speaking? What's the thought that goes into that, and what advice do you have for other aspiring speakers about what eggs they should put into which basket?

G Yeah, that's a great question. In fact I think that's honestly one of the things that first drew me to you was I remember you talking about Portfolio Life, you don't have to do just one thing. And that one thing may look like this today. It may look something totally different a year from now, several years from now. So, even speaking. I really like speaking. But there are parts of it I don't like. I'm married to my high school sweetheart. We have three beautiful little girls. So, I don't like being away from my family. Travel is fun somedays depending in where I'm going. But there's days where I'm speaking in a nonglamorous, nonsexy place. There's no beach in sight. And, so, there are plenty of those events where it's like, "I just want to be home right now." And, so, I think it's good as a human that you find regularly things to do that's just interesting and appealing to you and that you figure out how to make those work, whether that is being a speaker, or being an author, or being a writer, or having a course, or whatever those things are. I think it's important to diversify yourself and not just be like, "Well, I'm a speaker. So, I'm going to be a speaker for the rest of my life." No, I'm doing to do this as long as it's fun, as long as I still enjoy it. So, there may come a point where I just don't speak anymore. Why? Because I just don't enjoy it. But this new thing I'm really enjoying. So, take some of the pressure off of feeling like, "I need to know today what I'm doing for the rest of my life."

The other thing I would say, this relates to speaking, this relates to blogging, this relates to podcasting, but always remember, everybody starts at the same spot. Everybody starts at zero. So, yeah, I'm a decent speaker today, but I've done this a lot. This wasn't like some magical talent or gift. I started with one. One speaking engagement. And it's easy to look, "Well, Jeff's got a big podcast, and he's got a big blog, and he's got all these bestselling books." But he starts like writing one word. There's no special gift that Jeff has with writing, or I have with speaking, or any of these things. You start at zero, and you build up from there. There's people that, Jeff, you and I both look up to, and we admire and respect their businesses, and their talents, and their skills. And it was like they weren't magically gifted with those things. They just started at zero, and they just figured out as they go.

And, so, as it relates to speaking, speaking is definitely one of those things that can be mystifying. It can be confusing, and I know we've talked about it a little bit today but, Jeff, you and I are going to break it down even further where we're going to be going into depth, really talking about how do you get booked and paid to speak, and how do you find these engagements, and these opportunities? How do you craft your talk? Fees: What do you charge? Is it OK to speak for free? We're going to be talking all about that in the very near future, I believe.

J Yes, we are. And, so, if you are listening to this thinking, "I want to get into speaking." Maybe you want to do it full-time, part-time, on the side, one of the things we've sort of been talking around but haven't really clearly just said is speaking is fun. It is fun to connect and communicate with an

audience. And it's also a great to get paid to do that. And what I love about that, about your message, and even we're going to talk about in this workshop, Grant, is you show that that's possible for anyone, that if you've got a clear, consistent message that's communicated well, there's an audience out there that you can connect with. It's not just something for the social elite.

So, if you want to sign up for that, go to <http://GoinsWriter.com/speaker>. That's my blog, <http://GoinsWriter.com/speaker>. This is a free online workshop that Grant and I are doing together. And go check that out and register for it. And it will be a live Webinar. And if you missed the deadline, or it passes, and you're listening to this in the archives, go check that out anyway, and we'll send you a replay of that workshop. Because we just want that to help you. And to find out more about Grant Baldwin, you can go to <http://GrantBaldwin.com>. We didn't even mention your podcast which was something that you got into, because you were wanting to diversify your portfolio of work. But I love your podcast, Grant. How did you get into that? Incredible stories from amazing entrepreneurs, thought leaders, authors, speakers, and, then, me. But—

G Hang on. Let's jump in there. At this point we've had I think like 130-some episodes. But we have had only one repeat guest, Mr. Jeff Goins himself.

J Oh, I thought you were going to say Donald Trump [laughing].

G I have – he doesn't return my calls. He's too busy working on his hair or something.

J Well, thanks Grant. It is a pleasure to have you, and we look forward to seeing you guys on the speaker workshop that we'll be doing. Again, that's <http://GoinsWriter.com/speaker>. But it was a pleasure to have you my friend. And thank you for being so generous with the work that you do, and with sharing your message with the world. I am better for having heard it.

G Thanks, buddy. Excited for the workshop. It's going to be a lot of fun. Also, in addition to everything we're going to talk about, we'll be doing a lot of live Q&A. So, if you have questions about speaking, even Jeff you and I have talked some about this. OK, how do I do this? And how do I connect with a bureau? Do I need a bureau? And all that stuff. We'll be doing a lot of live Q&A. So, bring your questions. It's going to be fun.

J Cool. Thank you, Sir.

Resources

- [Booked and Paid to Speak](#) webinar with Grant and Jeff
- [Get Started as a Speaker](#) free course
- [How Did You Get Into That?](#) podcast with Grant Baldwin