



Jeff B: Filling your head with facts and stories and this and that is only part of the equation. You have to actually begin putting into practice the things that you're learning and the things that you are reading about. And that's why it has the opportunity to become a wisdom which is what I'm, hopefully, trying to help people do.

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Andy: Welcome to *The Portfolio Life* with Jeff Goins. I'm your host, Andy Traub, and this is the show that helps you pursue work that matters, make a difference with your art and discover your true voice. In the first few minutes of today's show Jeff confronts a situation that happened over nine years ago. After that tense exchange he and Jeff Brown discussed topics ranging from the radio business to creating your own brand and services. This is a conversation full of practical advice. If you're thinking of working for yourself podcasting and preparing for success.

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Jeff G: Hey, Jeff, thanks for being a part of the show today.

Jeff B: Well, thanks for having me, Jeff. I mean when I say I'm truly, truly honored to be invited. Thanks.

Jeff G: Well, I'm honored to enact some revenge. And you probably—

Jeff B: Oh, no.

Jeff G: —saw this coming.

Jeff B: I didn't.

Jeff G: All right. Well, there you go. So, Jeff, nine years ago, I think, to the day [laughing] the plot – I've been planning this for years. People are like, what is he talking about? So, you know, something like eight or nine years ago you and I met in your office at Way FM, a local radio station, to talk about a job that I was interviewing for. And you remember what happened in that conversation?

Jeff B: I don't remember the specifics, no. But, apparently, you do.

Jeff G: [Laughing].

Jeff B: I remember that I didn't end up hiring you. That much I do.

Jeff G: I remember that, too. I remember – my memory may be faulty. I remember you saying, "Well, think about the job." And we talked about it. You showed me the station. And I was a desperate college graduate moving to Nashville thinking that after touring with a band for a whole year, and having a college degree, that I would be very, very marketable in anything that involved music and business. And it turns out that that was not true. We were talking, and you said something like, "OK. Well, think it over. And then we can talk later, and we can talk numbers." And I said, "OK, all right. Cool." I didn't know what that meant. So, I called my wife who was a business major. "Like, what does this mean, talk numbers? Do I have the job?" And she's like, "That means they want to offer you the job, or at least talk about what you want to get paid." And I was like, "What do I want to get paid? I don't know." I was traveling with this band the previous year. I made like \$8,000 that year. So, the bar was set low for me. And, then, like a week or two later you emailed me back and said you were going to open up the job internally. And you didn't give me the job. I was like I have never forgotten. And now this show is just about making you feel bad about that decision [laughing]. No, I mean it's funny—

Jeff B: [Laughing]

Jeff G: —because years later you and I kind of ran back into each other. And I had started a blog, and had started writing books, and at the time I don't think I knew this. I don't even know if you knew this. But you were on a similar trajectory of transitioning from working a day job, you know, working at the radio station to being a full-time, online entrepreneur. And, then, shortly after that you and I got together for coffee. And you told me that's exactly what was happening was you were leaving your job to start doing podcasting and some other things. So, yes, the little bit of revenge, but mostly I want to talk about that journey that you and I have both experienced in very different ways, and I also want to talk about your experience of working in radio and how, I think, that probably prepared you for a lot of the work that you're doing now. Because I think there is some really cool lessons hidden in there. A lot of listeners are at a job that may be they don't feel like they're not going to be at forever which I think is basically everybody these days.

Jeff B: Yeah.

Jeff G: But they're wondering like how long do I stay in this place, and when do you dig in, and when do you kind of look for the escape hatch? And I think that it's the art of knowing when that is is really important. I think you have navigated that really well. One more thing, because this is my show, is I think a mutual friend of ours, Matt, ended up getting that job that I applied for. And it's this weird

collision of worlds where I did some work with Matt. And he was telling me what he was doing ? and I was like, "That was the job I applied for." Anyway. So, really, I'm just – my duty, this whole process of building a blog is kind of like *The Great Gatsby*. Building a blog, getting this podcast, and getting on the podcast is just all about finally getting back at you for this thing that happened years ago. No, I mean, I told you this a long time ago, and I mean it, that was a favor. At the time it felt like failure. But not getting that job I know I would not be doing what I'm doing now. Because if I ended up working that way, I wouldn't have got this job, worked for this nonprofit. I wouldn't have learned all these things about marketing. And I wouldn't have eventually used that to transition into becoming a full-time author, and blogger, speaker. So, I truly mean this, and you know I'm just teasing. Thank you. Thanks for being on the show. And thanks for helping me be where I am in this position to interview you.

Jeff B: Oh, I've always told people the story a slightly different way that I am singularly responsible for every bit of success you've had, because I did not hire you.

Jeff G: [Laughing] I think that's true. I could get behind that. I want to talk about podcasting a minute. Let's talk about radio. How did you get started in radio, and tell me a little bit about – I mean you, at one point, told me you've done basically every job there is to do at a radio station, is that right?

Jeff B: Yeah, that's true. Yeah.

Jeff G: So, how did you get that start?

Jeff B: Well, it was really accidental. I began as a Music Education major in college. I was going to be a music teacher, and I got to the point where I was doing student teaching at the junior high level, and that was all I needed to know to convince me that I did not want to teach for the rest of my life junior high students. And I actually dropped out of school. And I fell into this sort of – it's kind of one of those late-night infomercials that you see on TV: Join us for Professional Broadcasters Institute, and we'll teach you all you need to know about radio. I signed up for one of those courses. I was 21 years old. It was a six-month crash course. I was the first student to enroll, and the first to graduate. Got placed in a radio job afterward. And, really, learned everything on the job because, frankly, the school didn't teach me a whole heck of a lot. But that placement was important. I got my feet wet. I got to kind of learn as I went along. And radio was something that I'd always had a love for. As a kid I used to pretend I was a DJ in my room with my record player and radio. And I'm dating myself here, my eight-track [laughing] that I had in my bedroom.

Jeff G: Sure.

Jeff B: I had realized after college that this was not what I was going to do with my life. So, what was I going to be now? Well, here was that radio thing that I had kind of always fantasized about and played with. So, here is a fast-track to get there. Let's try this. And that's how I sort of fell into it. And I worked for an AM station that I just sat and ran the board, as they say. And I kind of just pushed the buttons and controls and made everything happened but wasn't allowed to talk. But, eventually, sort of worked my way up to being able to do that. And as you hinted a moment ago, kind of did everything that needed to be done until I had built up enough confidence in those around me to let me explore new things, and actually eventually turn on the microphone.

Jeff G: How long did that take? Because that's how I got to know you. I moved to Nashville, listened to your radio station, and you were – I don't even know if you did this the majority of the time that you worked at Way FM, but you were the voice on the radio of the morning show. So, when I would drive to my telemarketing job that I had to get because you turned me down [laughing]—

Jeff B: [Laughing].

Jeff G: —I would listen to your voice with spite. No, I knew that voice before I got turned down. After that I didn't listen to that radio station anymore [Laughing]. No, but that's how I got to know you is you were the cohost of the morning show, *Tennessee Mornings*. No, that was the TV show. What was the show called?

Jeff B: Well, the first one I did, I'm not sure which era you listened with.

Jeff G: With Jeff and Stacey?

Jeff B: Yeah, there was Jeff and Stace in the morning. That was the last iteration. I did the morning show with three different cohosts—

Jeff G: Wow.

Jeff B: —over the course of that time.

Jeff G: Did you keep firing them, too, like you let me go?

Jeff B: No. One left of her own accord. Another one, I didn't have a hand in firing. I wasn't the only one. And the third one left on her own as well.

Jeff G: Jeff Brown is going to tweet later: Most awkward interview I've ever done.

Jeff B: I haven't fired that many people.

Jeff G: Yeah, yeah. So, how long did it take to get on the microphone?

Jeff B: Probably – not too long. About maybe six to seven months in that first radio station. And this is all the way back in 1987. The station had an AM I started working for. But there was also a sister FM, the Top 40, 50,000 Watt FM station playing Top 40 music. And that's where I wanted to go. And about six or seven months into it I was given a weekend shift overnight, so of when nobody was listening. And, then, that led to weekend days. And, then, that led to some weekday stuff. And it was just sort of little by little working my way up to it. But nine months into that first job I actually got fired myself, so.

Jeff G: Good.

Jeff B: I knew you would feel that way.

Jeff G: [Laughing].

Jeff B: My humor in that day was sometimes blue. And I was working in a small market, and they didn't much care for that blue humor. I remember being called in on April 1, meeting with the program director and the GM, letting me know I had been fired. And I actually – this is how naïve I was. I actually thought it was an April Fool's joke.

Jeff G: Wow.

Jeff B: It was not.

Jeff G: So, you were like, "OK, guys, yeah, sure, whatever. I'll see you tomorrow."

Jeff B: Yeah. They were like, "No, we're actually serious."

Jeff G: Wow.

Jeff B: And, so, that was devastating for me. My first stint in radio was now over nine months in. And that really rattled my world. And that was something that caused me to revisit my faith. And actually two days later happened to be Easter Sunday.

Jeff G: Wow.

Jeff B: And I got down on my knees next to my bed and prayed this prayer the way I knew how to pray it. And accepting Christ. And, then, I started thinking about, "Well, maybe this radio thing I've chosen to do on my own isn't what God wants for me. But, then, maybe there's this thing called Christian radio I could look at." And, so, I started listening to the Christian radio station in town. And two days later after praying that prayer, I ran into the general sales manager for that radio station. And had a tape and resume in his hand two weeks later. And, then, did Christian radio for the next 25 years.

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Jeff G: So, you prayed that prayer. I mean, you got fired—

Jeff B: You like saying that, don't you [laughing].

Jeff G: You got what you deserved. Maybe you were the one having revenge. Like, "I want to fire a young upstart in his 20s like I got fired." How old were you, and how long had you been in radio at that point?

Jeff B: I was 22 when that happened, and I had been in radio all of nine months—

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: —when ?

Jeff G: What is it – I know I'm sort of admitting my own ignorance here, but I don't want to pretend I actually understand something. What is *blue humor*?

Jeff B: Well, let's just say, you know, I tended to do the kind of material that might be rated mature.

Jeff G: That's it.

Jeff B: I was a little bit more wild in those days, and it wasn't appropriate for the format, though I thought it was. And – at least not for the market I should say. This was a big station but in a small market called Muncie, Indiana. So, I stretched the boundaries a little too much and finally somebody had had enough of that.

Jeff G: Gotcha. So, you started working in Christian radio. And that – I mean the majority of your career was spent in that industry, is that right?

Jeff B: Yeah. Yeah. I started, again, doing whatever work I could get, weekends, and evenings. And, then, that led to bigger and better things. I started doing afternoons. I did a weekly Saturday night show for like six years at one station. But just a few years into it I managed to find a gig doing mornings. And I had only been in radio for about three years at the time. It was a small station in a small market, but it was a great opportunity. And did that for about a year and a half. And it was just great to be able to put that on the resume. And, then, that led to the next job, and the next job, and the next job. So, each iteration I was trying to sort of move up in responsibility and exposure every step of the way.

Jeff G: So, at this point you were committed to this thing that was not necessarily the goal. The goal was to be a music teacher, and you did that and realized this isn't for me. But at what point did you feel like this is the thing?

Jeff B: Well, I knew relatively early on that this was going to be the thing for quite a while. When I prayed that prayer I referenced a moment ago, and then two days later ran into this guy that was high up at the station, I knew now that this career I had chosen for me was where God wanted me, but in a slightly different place within that. And, so, I knew that I was going to be doing this for a long time to come.

Jeff G: Yeah, I mean running into that guy, I'm sure, was kind of incredible, felt miraculous—

Jeff B: Yeah.

Jeff G: —in terms of confirming, "OK, like I failed, but now I'm learning from that failure, and I'm on the right track. And this is confirmation that this seems just more than coincidental."

Jeff B: Exactly. Yeah, yeah.

Jeff G: Have you mostly been the on-air talent? Because when I got to know you, which I realized was – I didn't know this. You probably didn't know this, was more at the tail end of your career. You were, I think you eventually managing the station, or having more of a leadership role at the station. But it sounds like for many, many years you were the guy that was on the air?

Jeff B: Yeah, of the 26 years I spent in radio, the first 21 years I was on the air in some form or fashion. The last six years I was on the air was what you referenced before, doing mornings from

about 2002 to 2008. I came off the air at that time mainly because I didn't like getting up at 2:45 in the morning.

Jeff G: Yeah, I'm glad you mentioned that, because people don't realize that the morning show that they listen to at 7:30 AM you basically either aren't going to bed, or getting up really, really early for.

Jeff B: Yeah, it's tough. I don't know how folks who do it for decades manage it. I was able to do it for six years and—

Jeff G: Geez.

Jeff B: —was ready to stop. But I had, fortunately, been able to make myself valuable in other ways besides just being on the air. So, when I made that desire known, plans were made for that transition to be able to take place. And I continued in a role behind the scenes working as program director and in the marketing side for the next five or so years after that.

Jeff G: So, were you intentionally, I mean, I talk about this a lot. The show is called *The Portfolio Life*. It's really about not being a jack-of-all trades but being a master of some. Diversifying your skill set so that as an industry or a market changes, you're not out of a job. And I also think most people are wired to do more than one thing. Were you intentionally doing that? I mean, were you looking around the station going, "Oh, there's this need over here. No, there's that need over there. And I might not be always be on the air, and I want to make sure that I have a secure job"? Or were you just falling into other opportunities?

Jeff B: It was very intentional. In fact around 2008, or 2007 when I made that desire known, was about the time when social media was starting to become a thing And I knew it was going to impact our industry. And I wasn't sure exactly how radio was going to need to leverage these tools but was pretty certain that we were going to need to. So, when I was able to come off the air, I put most of my time and days into learning everything I could about this space and leveraging social media in ways that made sense for the radio station. And in very short order was able to sort of show myself as being the one in the company — it's a nationwide company, not just a station in Nashville — as the guy, the go-to guy, for figuring out this stuff to the point that I was speaking to various factions within the company; and, then, going to corporate and talking to executive leadership about the future of radio, and the things we needed to do to be prepared for changes that were — inevitable changes that were ahead of us. And all of that was me trying to make sure that I was as useful as I could be and not just one area, but all the areas that made sense for us going forward.

Jeff G: So, let's talk about podcasting. So, you started getting involved in social media, and how long ago did you launch a podcast? Because now we're getting caught up to the present. At what point did you start thinking about launching a podcast and, then, when did you actually do it?

Jeff B: It was the spring of 2013. I had thought about doing that for some time. But, honestly, Jeff, I was like, "Well, what would I do a podcast about? I don't know."

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: And I was, and had been, an avid reader, consumer of business books specifically for about 12 years at that time. And one day I was on my way home from the station and kind of like counting up

the books I had read so far that year. And it was – this was like the end of March. And I had set a goal, a modest goal, of a book a month but realized I had read almost a book a week—

Jeff G: Wow. Yeah.

Jeff B: —since the beginning of the year. I said that out loud to myself in the car, “Wow, that’s a book a week!” When I said that, that spoke podcast to me. At that time I thought of podcasts of being weekly shows. They’re not all that way, obviously, but many are. And I realized I had found my podcast topic, this thing I’m so passionate about that I can’t stop doing it, and I love talking about what I’m learning. How cool would it be to talk to the authors themselves, you being an exception—

Jeff G: [Laughing]

Jeff B: I’m just kidding. I had to throw a jab in there myself at some point.

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: I’ve had you on more than any other guest, actually.

Jeff G: You’re welcome.

Jeff B: [Laughing]. And, then, I had this, too, this frustration that more people didn’t read either at all, or any more than you did. If you’ve seen the stats on those of us in this country who spend a fair amount of time reading, the numbers are very, very low. And, so, I thought, well, maybe I could somehow impact that or maybe I could make some of this more assessable to folks. And it kind of scratched all those itches when I came up with the idea. And, so, I spent the next several months, April, May and June kind of planning things, and setting up interviews; and, then, in July of 2013 it had actually launched.

Jeff G: Yeah, and you didn’t mess around. This isn’t like you were like talking into your i-phone and just uploaded it to the Internet. I mean this is a fully produced, professional sounding, radio show. I mean you invested a lot of effort, and time, and I imagine money into doing this right which at the time was just a hobby, right? I mean, why did you do that?

Jeff B: Well, I’m accused sometimes of being a perfectionist. But I make a sort of distinction between perfectionism and excellence. And I think you would agree that perfectionist is kind of a moving target and often prevents us from—

Jeff G: Sure.

Jeff B: —launching.

Jeff G: Or being happy.

Jeff B: Yeah, yeah. But I view excellence as a way of saying, “Well, this is how I approach anything that matters to me. And, so, this mattered to me. It mattered to me to do it with excellence and having that radio background gave me considerable head start. I felt like I had my head wrapped around what makes a good interview, how to connect with an audience, how to create audio content

that's compelling, and that people want to keep listening to, and how to create forward moment in a conversation so that it doesn't get boring and go off the rails, or what have you. So, I had all those skills and that if I was going to bring that to the table, then I needed to couple that with great sound. I didn't want there to be any barriers to entry at all. I didn't want there to be any hurdles the listener had to overcome to enjoying the content. So, I did everything I had been taught to do all those years to make sure that none of those barriers existed.

Jeff G: It's an excellent podcast. I mean it's – the *Read-To-Lead* podcast is great. I'm certainly not the only one thing that thinks that about it. It's an award-winning podcast. It's been featured in the media again and again. And I know you've put a lot of hard work into it. I'm glad to see it's finally getting the recognition it deserves, if for nothing else, having me on as a guest a couple of times [Laughing].

Jeff B: [Laughing].

Jeff G: You know, Jeff, I want to talk shop now. You are more than anybody, and I mean this. Now, I have to sort of compliment you back into good graces, because I'm working on another book, and I've got to get back on the show.

Jeff B: That's right.

Jeff G: All that means is that I keep writing lots of books. I write books fast, I guess. You, more than anybody, I think, have the authority to teach people about podcasting, because you've done it. And I mean it in the grand scheme of things, not like you've got a podcast talking about this thing, and then people ? you. And they're like, "How do you do that?" And, then, you tell people. And I think that's totally fine. There's a lot of merit to that. But, I mean, you know what it's like to be on the radio. You understand the industry. And I remember having lunch with you, I think maybe two years ago probably right before the *Read-to-Lead* podcast took off, and I was telling you about my sister who had done some work in radio. And I said, "What advice would you have?" And you said, "Get into podcasting." You know, like this is the future. You saw that. And it's hard to compete with 26 years of experience on the air understanding how to interview people, how to move the conversation forward, how to communicate in sound bites. I mean you just really have the authority to talk about that in a way that isn't faking it, frankly.

So, because you and I know that podcasting is the *it* thing now for content creators, and has been for the past couple of years, but just keeps gaining momentum. People are seeing it as a legitimate way of getting your message out there faster than a blog often. This is why I have a podcast is I was tired of hearing about it. And I liked audio content. I think, like you, I read a lot of books via Audible and audio books 'cause I'm always, you know, it's hard to sit down and read a book. And I do that, too. But I'm always moving somewhere at some point in the day: driving to the office, running errands, taking my son to the park or something. And I've got five to 10 minutes in the car. And every day that adds up. You can read a book a week just doing that, listening to stuff in the car, on your i-phone, or whatever.

So, because so many people are getting into podcasting, they're not all doing the work that you've done, and they don't all have the experience that you have. I mean, let's try to help them a little bit. Let's unpack some of what you've learned over a quarter of a century and help people not make some of the common mistakes that, frankly, you and I see happen a lot on podcast shows that we listen to, and also get interviewed on.

And let's just pretend I'm not making any of those mistakes, otherwise I'll have to end the call prematurely.

Jeff B: [Laughing].

Jeff G: Where do you start? So, I want to start a podcast. You know, there's technical aspects of that. There are lots of videos on YouTube about that. But let's talk about the show itself. When you chose the *Read-to-Lead* podcast when you started that, honestly, I was like, "Huh, OK. Well, it's about books? All right. Cool, that sounds interesting." And now the numbers, the success speaks for itself. It's a great show. It's a great idea. But at the time that it launched I was like, "Really? I mean, it's not about business. It's not about radio. It's not about marketing. It's just books and reading. It's an audio show about reading." It sounded weird to me. But, gosh, it's a great show. And you've done such a wonderful job with it. And it's clear now that the reason you chose that was because it was something that you had experience with, passion, and there was a need for it.

While we're thinking about doing a podcast, what should we go through in terms of even figuring out like you did, what do I talk about?

Jeff B: Yeah, I truly feel like there has to be that passion there. It was something that I wasn't going to be tiring of very soon. Obviously, reading is important to me. But it goes beyond that. I think filling your head with facts and stories and this and that is only part of the equation. You have to actually begin putting into practice the things that you are learning and the things that you are reading about. And, then, that's when it has the opportunity to become a wisdom which is what I'm hopefully trying to help people do. But for me that's where it starts.

You have to be truly passionate about the topic you're talking about, and you have to be able to sit down and go, "OK. Who is my perfect listener? What does that person look like?" You may have heard words like Avatar thrown around. In radio we called it a listener profile. We actually created a persona of who the ideal listener was, and we filter our content through that individual. And I encourage clients to go so far as to tran (?) out from the Internet, or tear from a magazine an image that represents who that individual is to them and actually have that picture in front of you as you're recording your podcast. And pretend that you're talking to that person, pretend that you're talking to one person as well. That can serve as a reminder for that also.

And, then, beyond that, I think it's important to understand what your worldview is. In other words, your answer to the question why you're doing this in the first place. I'm a big Simon Sinek fan. And I think it's important that people understand why you do it, because as Simon says, "That's what people buy." People buy not what you do but why you do it. And, so, you need to be able to articulate that at the outset, I believe, of every episode so that anybody coming to you for the first time knows at the outset why you're doing this. And that gives them reason for wanting to stick around among other things.

Jeff G: Why did you decide on the interview format for a show? It's a really popular one. I'm using it on this one. We also do kind of like Q & A episodes for *The Portfolio Life*. You could have just done 30-minute or 60-minute monologue of, "I read this book, and here's what I learned." Why was doing interviews with the authors of these books that you read important?

Jeff B: For me I knew I would enjoy that more. And I knew that my passion for doing the interviews would come through. And I felt like that I had the best chance of creating a show at end of the day that people would enjoy listening to if I did what I do best, and that's ask great questions and let the expertise of a particular book up to the person who actually wrote it. I hear a lot of podcasters try to stand toe-to-toe with their guests and compete with their guests for time and attention. If you are doing a guest-driven show, I believe, that you need to play second fiddle to the guest as the host. Your

job is to ask the questions and then oftentimes just get out of the way. And don't feel like you have to follow every question with some sort of affirmation or, "Oh, that's great." Or, "That's awesome," or regurgitate what the guest just said in your own words, something a lot of podcasters do. It feels awkward in the moment just to ask the next question, but to the listener it feels completely natural. And it gives your show that forward momentum I talked about earlier.

Jeff G: That's great. That's awesome. I absolutely agree with that. Yeah, you don't want to regurgitate what the person just said.

Jeff B:/Jeff G: [Laughing]

Jeff G: I wish I could see your face. Or maybe this is a jo— I don't – anyway.

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Jeff G: What is it about a conversation? I mean this is just something I've noticed, and I'm curious about. You and Stace, you know, when I would drive to work in the morning was you guys having a conversation. Most radio shows tend to be dialogues. Even powerhouse shows like Dave Ramsey it's just him, most of the show he's answering questions from people calling. Dan Miller, a mutual friend of ours, kind of does a solo podcast. But, again, it's sort of a dialogue because every podcast is a response to listener questions.

Is there some rule in broadcasting about that? I mean, you see that on TV. You typically have cohosts, people playing off of each other. What is it about a dialogue that makes for more compelling content?

Jeff B: Well, I think first of all just hearing multiple voices is more interesting just by its very nature. There's nothing wrong with authorities like Michael Hyatt who doesn't do this as much anymore, but when he first launched his podcast it was Michael only.

Jeff G: Yeah. It was all him.

Jeff B: And Michael did a very, very good job of talking directly to you, the individual listener, and it really felt like you and Michael were having a conversation. That's very, very difficult to do alone. Michael is very good at it.

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: But it's not easy for most people in the context of a podcast or radio, unless you are sharing emails like I mentioned Dan doing. You don't have that immediate sounding board. Certainly in podcasting and radio you can incorporate phone calls eventually and that sort of thing when a topic is discussed or brought up. But in podcasting oftentimes you don't have that opportunity. So, that other person can be that sounding board.

Having said that, what a lot of podcasters do in the interview space or when it's a co-hosted podcast, two people talking back and forth, they can oftentimes inadvertently leave the listener out or view the listener as somebody who's the eavesdropping fly on the wall of this conversation. And I think that's a mistake. I think it's possible using certain tips and techniques to actually make the listener when they walk away from it having felt like they actually participated in the conversation even though it's technically impossible for them to do so.

Jeff G: You gave me some interesting tips a while back that I thought were really interesting. You said that very thing, you said, "Include the listener as a participant in this show." And you also said to make it a single person, talking about that Avatar thing, but you made a very specific encouragement, and something about like at the end of the episode don't say, "If you guys enjoyed listening to this," don't make it sound like you're speaking to the multitudes. Because when the person is listening to it, they're not sitting around a boardroom table with everybody else in the organization listening. They're listening in the car, on their phone, or i-pod. It feels like a one-on-one conversation with them.

Speak to them directly, because that's how they're experiencing that. I've never forgotten that. I thought that was a really good idea.

Jeff B: Well, thank you. And developing that listener profile or that Avatar, aids you in that process. And then it goes beyond that, too. If you are doing a podcast where you are interviewing somebody there is often opportunity to precede a question with context or often a need to precede a question with context. And what most interviewers will do is they'll direct that context at the guest. And the guest oftentimes is already aware of that context.

In my case it might be let's saying I'm interviewing an author named Susan, let's say. And I might say, "Susan, in your latest book, you talk about X, Y, Z as it relates to A, B, C," yadda, yadda, and go on with my question, whatever that is.

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: Susan already knows all of that. Why am I saying that? I'm saying that so that the listener knows that. And, so, my point is, well say it to the listener. And that often involves then referring to your guest maybe in the third person which nothing feels more awkward when you do that in the moment. It's just you and the guest and the listener is not there.

What I'm getting at, though—

Jeff G: Oh.

Jeff B: Treat the show as you're recording it with your guest, or however your format is, as if the listener is there in that moment.

Jeff G: Uh-huh (yes).

Jeff B: And they'll feel as if they were on the other end.

Jeff G: Do you do that in radio? I mean is that something that you did in radio, or is that something that you've adapted to podcasting?

Jeff B: Absolutely did it in radio. Yeah. It was very important to what we did. It was a fabric of everything we did on the air. And every topic we considered discussing, it was always filtered through that listener profile to start with. And, then, we talked about between the two of us before we went on the air with it, what angles should we take on this? What angle is unique to us, our show, our station, that other stations aren't going to be talking about this topic from?

You know, it's oftentimes something in the news that day, or something happening in the world, or whatever it might be. But we knew we needed to take advantage of the opportunity to talk about it in the unique way that most stations wouldn't do.

Jeff G: Yeah, that angle thing is interesting. I mean I just got done or am wrapping up doing all of these interviews on podcasts and radio shows for my book. And we've got a media kit. I think we sent you one, "Hey, here's some recommended questions that you can ask that basically Jeff is prepared to answer. These are good – you'll get good talking points out of this."

Jeff B: Right.

Jeff G: But a lot of people did was they just read those questions to me. And like that's fine. I can answer those questions. I'm prepared to do that. But going the extra mile to take an angle on it. To say, "OK, how does this apply to entrepreneurs?" Or, "How does this apply to stay-at-home moms?" When people did that it made the conversation a lot more fun, because I wasn't just answering questions that I've answered a hundred times.

Jeff B: Right.

Jeff G: We were talking about stuff that I was prepared to talk about. But doing it in a way that was interesting and relevant to the audience. So, I love that. So, I want to hear an example of that. Because I can't quite wrap my head around it.

So, I'm interviewing you, Jeff Brown, but I want to direct this conversation at you, *Portfolio Life*, listener. Can you give us an example, you know, for example, use my book or something since we've done some interviews. How would you talk about my book but you're not talking to me, you're talking to the audience?

Jeff B: Yeah, it's pretty simple. What most podcasters might start off doing is by saying to you, Jeff, "Hey Jeff in chapter five I noticed that you go into great detail about X, Y, and Z. Tell us how you came to that conclusion." I just made that up about it at the top of my head. But a better way to do that would be to not start the sentence first of with "For those of you listening out there," which is what most podcasters will do.

Jeff G: Um.

Jeff B: But skip that altogether and say, "You may not know this, but in Chapter 5 of Jeff's latest book he goes into great detail about X, Y, Z, and A, B, C. Jeff, tell us a little bit more about how you came to that conclusion." So, by using third person and then second person, you, to start that sentence you may not know this, but it's not obvious at the beginning of that sentence who the "you" is. You've just finished answering the previous question. And as I've started context for the next one, nobody knows who "you" is until I get to your name in third person form. And, then, suddenly it's obvious that the sentence that I'm saying now is being directed to the listener without it having to be preceded by, "Well, for those of you listening out there, for everybody out there in podcast land," the very impersonal, or I would say very awkward, ways of addressing the listener. You don't have to stop what you're doing and then address them as some faceless collective. You can very naturally – it's almost like metaphorically turning your head and looking at them; and, then, saying what you would say as if that individual was sitting right there in the room with you, again, referring back to that picture of that listener profile that you've got in front of you as a reminder. Turn your head, look to

them, and say it how you would say it if they were sitting right there. And it will always come out sounding natural. And on the listener end like you're talking just to me.

Jeff G: Yeah, it makes total sense, and it does feel awkward. It does feel awkward for me to say, "You really need to listen to my friend, Jeff, talk about podcasting, because he knows what he's doing. Jeff, thank so much for being on the show." But to the listener, like all of a sudden, they don't feel like their eavesdropping. They feel like they're a part of the conversation, and I can see how that would be significant.

I want to warp up here, but before I do that. Let's talk a little bit more about the interview process of most podcast shows that you and I listen to in kind of the business marketing, advice space, here's how to do something. A lot of interviews. I get that on a real practical level of it's easier to maintain the conversation if you're interviewing big-name people, and you're not a big name. It would be easier to attract attention. If I like Seth Godin, I can go listen to 100 podcasts that have interviewed Seth Godin and learn something different on every one of them, because he's such a phenomenal guest. What are some things that interviewers can avoid, especially with how they ask questions? Like how could the questions just not be boring for the listener, you know?

So many times I see that happening in podcasts where either they're using the guest to just say, "Yep, yep, I've been talking about this for a long time. And the guest is just confirming everything that I'm saying." Or they're completely agreeing with the guests to the point that there's no real dialogue even to the extreme that maybe they're being antagonistic and say, "No, you're wrong." I don't see that very often. But typically it's kind of boring. And how do you avoid that boredom?

Jeff B: I am all about preparedness and practice. I saw a Will Smith quote the other day, and I'm paraphrasing it here. He said something about, "I've always considered myself to be just an average talent. But what I do have is this insane obsessiveness for preparedness and then practice." And I believe that goes a long way. Something that most podcasters – I don't mean to lump everybody into the same group, but I think it's safe to say most – don't take that seriously. It's not about being perfect. It's about approaching what you do with excellence like we talked about before.

So, for me, I might put – I'm reading a book as part of my preparation in my case. But I might put anywhere from three to six hours in preparing for an interview that's going to last 30 minutes. And, then, on the backend I might spend another hour or two in postproduction, getting that ready. And, so, that for me involves – as I mentioned reading the book – but also then preparing those questions in advance, typing them out, on Google Doc and having them in front of me at the ready when it's time to conduct the interview. And as I go through that process, Jeff, over the course of usually several days, those questions go through several iterations.

So, I'll put sort of the basis of the question I want to ask down first. But as more days past, I figure out ways I want to fine tune or hone that question to the point that by the time the interview is set to happen, I have articulated that question as succinctly, and as perfectly, and as compellingly as I know how to the point that I've actually typed it out exactly word for word how I want to ask it.

Now, it's not so much a script in that sense, but I at least have in front of me what I consider to be the best possible form or way of asking this question to get to the meat of what I want to get to. And, then, practice reading that question so I no longer sound like I'm reading it. But, also, to practice to the point that as I'm reading the question, I can ad lib along the way or not have to necessarily read it verbatim, inflecting in some life in the moment, some personality, some realness in that moment.

These are all things that take time to master. But at the outset I think if you're not willing to put that kind of effort into it, then you're going to be producing a podcast that is going to struggle, I believe, because as you mentioned so many people are doing interview-driven podcasts and interviewing a lot of the same people. You're going to end up doing a podcast that is going to find it

difficult to stand out. The way to stand out is to really come at this prepared and do the things that probably 96-98 percent of podcasters are simply not willing to do.

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Jeff G: Do you think one of the secrets to your success has just been that preparation? I mean, was marketing an important? Is there any sort of growth hacking techniques that you used to get a new and noteworthy or any of that stuff that sometimes you hear about on marketing blog, or was it primarily the preparation, the practice, and delivering an excellent product?

Jeff B: The main two things I give to that are the practice and preparation. I think that, for me, is number one. And the second thing I would say is consistency as much as possible. More so than any sort of growth hacking, or any sort of other marketing techniques is just doing it consistently week, after week, after week and trying to do it with excellence. And those two things I think as much as anything – in fact I'm going to be giving a talk on this in a couple of months about *Five Proven Methods for Getting Your Podcast Noticed*. And it has nothing to do with marketing. It's all this same stuff.

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: For me it's preparedness, practice, and then consistency more than anything else.

Jeff G: It's a great perspective, Jeff, because I mean the reality is if you're on i-tunes you're being marketed, right?

Jeff B: Right.

Jeff G: You're already in this incredible network of podcast where people go to daily to find interesting content. And if they find something consistently that delivers value again and again and again in the same way where there is some sort of interesting format. I mean I think all great shows there is a certain predictability to them. "Oh, like, they're going to ask them those five burning questions." There's something coming. I think it creates a lot of loyalty. So, I love that.

OK. Last question. I promised you that we would finish this up in a reasonable amount of time, and we are not at that reasonable amount. But it's just so interesting. So, thanks for playing along. You're a professional podcaster. Is that fair to say?

Jeff B: Yeah, yeah, sure.

Jeff G: OK. How do you make money? On *The Portfolio Life* we talk about the importance of, again, kind of diversifying your revenue streams, the stuff that you do. And sometimes the thing that you do isn't actually the thing that you get paid for. Now, I blog several times a week. I don't necessarily get paid for those blog posts, but they lead to other forms of revenue down the line.

What does that look like for you in a nutshell? I know that you've got different things going on. You in the past couple of years started a podcast, quit your job and have been doing this full time. What does business look like to you?

Jeff B: Yeah, there is some direct monetization that happens with sponsors for my show. Like Blinkist and Linda.com who come along side and say, "This is something we believe in, and we want

to actually pay you a flat fee per episode to include us.” Of course, there are multitude of opportunities to work out affiliate arrangements with different sponsors. Those, usually don’t lead to a whole lot I have found.

Jeff G: Really?

Jeff B: Personally. I even connected with Audible early on which seemed like the perfect pairing for podcasts like mine.

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: In hindsight maybe I didn’t give them enough of a chance, but sort of the sense I got was that Audible was already all over every podcast under the sun.

Jeff G: Yeah.

Jeff B: And anybody who wanted an Audible account, certainly the kind of person that would come to my podcast in the first place probably already had one. And, so, I didn’t see a lot of success there. But with Blinkist I have. And I’ve worked on some really cool partnerships with them. Blinkist is an app that inside their app they serve up a business book summaries in written form. And, then, with the help of my listeners, they have eventually added to that audio versions of those same summaries, a perfect kind of partner. We partnered in other ways where they’ve helped market my show to their 80,000 users. And I have a curated book list in their app along with some other relatively big names. And so that’s been huge. Direct monetization for podcasts is tough unless you’re a John Lee Dumas. You’ve been doing it every day and the snowball starts rolling down the hill and picks up that inevitable momentum. It’s really difficult. Or unless you’re fortunate enough to have north of 30, 40, 50,000 downloads a month.

So, in addition to that, you can indirectly monetize your content. And I’ve had a fair amount of success with that. I do a lot more speaking than I ever did over the last two years speaking at various podcast conferences. By the time this episode comes out, it should be public – at least I hope it will be – that I’ll be keynoting my first conference that is—

Jeff G: Congrats.

Jeff B: ? I’m hugely stoked about.

Jeff G: What conference is that?

Jeff B: It’s going to be Podcast Southeast happening in Atlanta. I think the date is June 27 if I’m not mistaken. And, so, I’m really looking forward to that. I’m doing a lot more of that than I ever did. And, so, my podcast is the springboard for all of these things. The recognition that has come from doing it and, again, doing it – try to do it with excellence and trying to do it consistently, has led to all sorts of other invitations, phone calls, requests for different kinds of work related to podcasting. I did not know that I was going to be doing this at the outset, but much like I think you preach, I listened to friends of mine who said, “Jeff, there is something in this space I think you need to be doing.” And that was coaching other podcasters. And I was resistant to that. I did not want to do that. I looked at others who were already doing that and felt like, “Well, that space is pretty well covered.” But those same friends in my mastermind group said, “No, but you don’t understand. You have the skillset, and

the experience, and this background that some of these other folks may not have and you bring many things that are uniquely you to this space. And I think you should do that.”

And so unlike some others, I don't do a podcast on podcasting. But my podcast serves as the calling card for my ability to help you do it with excellence. Does that make sense?

Jeff G: Ah, makes perfect sense. And that's basically what my blog has been. I've never really monetized the blog itself. I've never done ads. Any affiliate stuff has never been that huge for me. It's really been a means of connecting me with other people who have led to all kinds of opportunities from publishing books, to speaking, to selling online courses. So, I can definitely relate to that. And I think there's something – I've heard this again and again from people. There's something about hearing your voice that tends to garner trust in ways that certainly text doesn't, or at least it does it more easily. I listen to you and I go, “I can trust that guy. I'm going to call him and pay him to coach me.”

Jeff B: [Laughing].

Jeff G: Well, I'm so glad you're doing it. I'm so glad that you responded to the itch or the idea of launching a podcast a couple of years ago. The success of the Read to Lead podcast speaks for itself. I'll be sure to link up to all that including the best episodes which feature me.

Jeff B: [Laughing]

Jeff G: Jeff, you turned me down for a job. It was the best thing that ever happened to me. I tried to get back at you, but I feel like with all these things that you said, what good podcasts should do. And I'm going, “Ah, gosh. I feel like you got back to me at the end pointing out all my flaws,” albeit, I'm sure, unintentionally.

Jeff B: Yes, unintentional. I will say the things that I teach, the things that I coach, they don't ensure that you have a successful podcast. And you not doing them doesn't ensure that you won't be successful. However, I think all the things I teach I think increase the likelihood that you'll be successful, the likelihood that you'll stand out, the likelihood that you'll get noticed in the long run. But it takes that stick-to-itiveness and being to ride it out. I would argue that for me I had various little jumps in plateaus and new plateaus I was able to experience along the way, but they were baby steps for the most part. It wasn't until about 18 months in doing a podcast that I really started to see some larger, more exciting things begin to happen. And it would have been real easy to quit long before January 2015 came. But when January 2015 hit, that's when some really exciting things began to happen. And I'm glad I stuck it out and didn't throw in the towel.

Jeff G: Oh, I'm glad you did, too. And I know there is so much to learn. I'm glad that I have a great teacher and coach like you. And you've helped a lot of other people both personally and also through the example. I mean you've raised the bar really high. And I agree. If you have a message that you want the world to hear, remove all kinds of impediments and obstacles between the message and the audience. The best way to do that is to do it really, really well. And you, Jeff Brown, good Sir, have done it excellently. And I'm trying to follow in your footsteps. Thanks so much for being a part of *The Portfolio Life*. Man, this has been a treasure trove of information, and I'm grateful for your time.

Jeff B: Well, thank you Jeff. Again, I'm honored to be asked to be on. And, so, I thank you for giving me that chance.

Jeff G: My pleasure.

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Andy: So, what do you want to start? Are you ready to do the hard work to do it right? We'd love to hear about your project, your goal, and what you're working towards. You can leave a comment on today's episode at <http://GoinsWriter.com> or on Twitter by mentioning @JeffGoins. If today's show was helpful to you, we'd love for you to return the favor by leaving a review on i-Tunes. I'm Andy Traub, and on behalf of Jeff Goins, thanks for spending some time with us today. Now, go build your portfolio.

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Jeff B: The way to stand out is to really come at this prepared and do the things that probably 96-98 percent of podcasters are simply not willing to do.