

EPISODE 100**[INTRODUCTION]**

[0:00:08] JG: Welcome to the Portfolio life. I'm Jeff Goins and this is it. Episode 100. The big one, and this marks a really interesting milestone for this show. We've been doing this for two years, we've had two different cohosts and experimented a lot of different formats. To be honest with you, recently, I was considering killing the show. I wasn't sure that it was worth continuing, I didn't know if people were out there listening.

So I took my cohost, Andy Trom and we went out to lunch. We started talking about what was working, what wasn't working. I talked about things that I enjoy, the things that I didn't enjoy and I just had this looming question, "Does anybody care about this? Is anybody getting anything out of this episode?" And about halfway through lunch we started talking about it and brain storming and dreaming what this could be, what this shouldn't be and I just said, "Hey, Andy, can we just go into my office and record this and talk about this and process through what this is and whether or not we should continue it?"

He said, "Sure," and that's what we did. We talked through the show, what did we like, what didn't we like, what was working, what wasn't working. Over the past few weeks reached out to some of you in the community and asked you what you liked, what you wanted to change and what we could improve upon or get rid of. And I got some really interesting feedback so all of that became Episode 100 where we go to you, the community and ask you, is this thing worth continuing and is the way we're doing it working?

So like any project that I do. It's really important to me that it doesn't just serve my interests. Of course I want to be having fun and enjoy what I'm doing. This has been fun but if it's not serving you, if it's not helping you or if I could be doing it better then that's what I want to do. So I submit to you, our conversation where I'm very vulnerable and handy about what thing's working and not working and where we want to go from here. But I also want to open up the communication channel with you and hear what you have to say. We'll talk more about that in a second.

Here is my conversation with Andy, celebrating Episode 100 and trying to figure out where we go from here.

[EPISODE]

[0:02:30.4] JG: Okay, so Andy I think we've done — this show has existed for a hundred episodes and roughly two years now.

[0:02:37.4] AT: Yeah.

[0:02:39.1] JG: So I think we should talk about what's working and what's not working.

[0:02:42.2] AT: I'm feeling really vulnerable right now. Am I being fired on air?

[0:02:48.1] JG: Maybe?

[0:02:48.6] AT: Maybe. Well I'm okay then. We'll still be friends, right?

[0:02:50.9] JG: Yeah.

[0:02:51.5] AT: Okay good.

[0:02:52.1] JG: Over the weekend, I got back into podcasting, I hadn't listened to many podcast and...

[0:03:01.2] AT: That sounds like, "Over the weekend, I got back into skiing."

[0:03:06.1] JG: This is what 21st century nerds pick back up.

[0:03:09.9] AT: That's right.

[0:03:10.6] JG: I still haven't learned how to ski. I feel like the podcast is something that's just there and I've been...

[0:03:20.1] AT: The Portfolio Life we're talking about.

[0:03:21.8] JG: The one that we're on right now. It's fun, it's a fun outlet, I haven't been super intentional with it and kind of lazily, I just thought something would come together out of that and I think some good things have come together but I also, if I'm being honest, I'm a little bit disappointed with the product, with the result and I don't know which part specifically I'm disappointed with. I mean I think if I had to put a description on it I would say the actual reach of the show. I anticipated when I heard lots of my friends getting in a podcasts and watched people getting into it, succeeding.

Meaning like they were bloggers, they were doing something else, I started podcasting and they got all this attention, this new attention on this thing. The podcast does fine but I don't feel like it's gotten a bunch of new attention around the topics that we talk about or that it's been like a whole new brand builder or way to reach more people than I was already reaching. So I went to the Twitter and I went to Instagram and I went to Facebook.

[0:04:29.3] AT: Went to the Facebook.

[0:04:32.1] JG: And started asking for feedback. You followed along a lot as well. So we don't have anything scripted here and I just — you and I were supposed to have lunch today and we did have lunch today and I asked you...

[0:04:44.2] AT: Thanks for lunch, again.

[0:04:45.2] JG: You're welcome. I took you to the cheapest place in town intentionally. I thought it would be — I thought we could just record the conversation, I thought that would, without wasting people's time, I thought I would honor the attention that they've been giving. If this is like the first show that you're listening to, you're like, "What in the world is going on?"

But hundred episodes is a big deal. I think it's an opportunity to either double down and keep doing what we've been doing or to completely scrap it and start anew or something in the middle.

[0:05:18.0] AT: Yeah but based on our conversation, I don't know how you can completely scrap a podcast unless you go, "Hey, it's all interviews and now it's just monologue." Or, "It was just me and now we've got 28 people on." To me, it feels like it's going to be more — if they listen to episode 25 and listen to 125 they're going to think, this is not the same show.

[0:05:40.1] JG: Yeah, well let's come back to that because I've got some ideas of some things that we could do differently or better but let's talk about the feedback that we got. We didn't do any sort of survey or anything like that. I just, I went to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and sort of asking people what they thought of the show. You were following along, that I didn't tell you that I was going to do that but you kind of popped in there.

[0:06:06.7] AT: Some people mentioned me, I pay attention.

[0:06:09.4] JG: How did that feel to you I guess?

[0:06:12.5] AT: I think that your audience, this audience, you who are listening, they're generally very kind people so they're not just going to rip into you, right?

[0:06:20.1] JG: Yeah, that's true.

[0:06:21.8] AT: I was expecting the feedback to be mostly kind, that people are going to be like, "It's horrible, it sucks." And I don't think we need to be embarrassed of what we produced but we both know that if you're listening to 10 podcast and you listen to ours that you would go, "Yeah, it's probably not the best," and I don't think we've ever, cause I wouldn't want to be a part of it, we've never gotten on and just winged it. Like we just really, "Ah, whatever."

[0:06:49.2] JG: That's true.

[0:06:51.3] AT: But the feedback surprised me in that because a feedback loop on podcast is really hard to hear basically. That there aren't retweets of podcasts, the medium usually ends with the listener so you don't know that they're listening other than the podcast downloads. It surprised me how many people are like, "I listened to every single episode."

[0:07:13.0] JG: Yeah, that was surprising.

[0:07:14.3] AT: it's because you just — we could look on there, “Oh, there's tens of thousands of downloads,” or whatever but there might be a tweet about it or five tweets about it, you don't see that. That was encouraging, there was some feedback about, I wanted to be really, really writer focused and that struck me because that's not really the essence of the portfolio life by definition is that it's a portfolio, it's a lot of different types of work that go into your work. A lot of different areas.

But people were very kind and I felt like the other feedback I recall was people appreciated the interviews where you just interview and have a conversation with someone. They also liked this, they also liked when you and I have conversations. A few people said nice things about me, which I appreciated.

[0:08:02.0] JG: Yeah. I was kind of surprised by that. I mean, not to be a jerk but I was like, if I'm being super critical of myself, I'm going, “Okay, what is this thing?” A, you do interviews with people because it's fun for you, meaning me and it's easy and it's just sort of a throw away and then you and I do these things because I can show up, you can do a lot of the show prep and then we walk away with the show and edit it and that sort of thing. I'm sort of phoning it in right? I was listening to these podcast over the weekend and I'm going, “Man, I'm not doing this, I'm listening to...”

[0:08:45.7] AT: “That was a sweet transition,” or yeah.

[0:08:49.9] JG: This isn't like beat up on portfolio life but I just realized I wasn't doing my best work.

[0:08:56.5] AT: It's beat up on portfolio half hour. It's right.

[0:09:01.0] JG: It's just like, I always want to be getting better and I had a conversation a long time ago with a friend and we were working on this project together and I was talking about this thing and I was like, “Just not that good. It's not as good as it could be. It could be so much

better,” and this person said, “I don’t understand, all these people like it, it’s successful, it’s doing really well. What’s wrong?”

I said, “Nothing’s wrong, it’s just not as good as it could be, it can always be better. I always want to be doing better.” That’s just me, I think a lot of people will get comfortable doing something and do it over and over again, that can be really successful. Maybe sometimes it can be more successful than constantly changing things.

But there were some great affirmations of things that I didn’t expect to hear. Like, “I listen to every episode, you’ve got to keep Andy, he is essential to the show’s flow and feel.” That’s not to discredit what you bring to the table but I’m just going, “You’re my friend, and I’m lazy, you can take care of this so it works for me therefore I’m going to do it.”

[0:10:14.0] AT: It was looking at every piece of the show and saying is it really essential? We’re honest enough with each other and I think I said this too via text message or a phone, I don’t know, whatever but I was like, “Hey man, as we reevaluate, if I don’t fit, that’s cool but we need to make something that you feel good about,” and we both know that there’s a lot more room to add value to just make it something that people will want to talk about and I think I said this at lunch.

The shows rarely create their own spark, they rarely sort of make their own wave. I think part of the pressure is Jeff that you create a lot of content. It can be — there’s some people and all they do is podcast, they don’t blog, they don’t write books, they don’t teach courses, they don’t speak at events or even hold events, they just podcast. That’s a lot of work.

So the other part of the conversation, and again this is just us unscripted having conversation, is how much time do you have and how do we structure it so that it can be great but this is probably not going to be your blog. You’re not going to go my marketing channel for the year’s podcast and that sort of email subscribers unless it is but for now it’s not.

[0:11:31.4] JG: Right. Let’s talk about the feedback because there are a few things that surprise me. I guess the first piece of feedback didn’t surprise me but it was in a strange way affirming and when I put this out there, I tweeted, “I’ve been thinking a lot about my podcast, The Portfolio

Life,” and I was doing this in the context of listening to all these other shows and looking at what they had that I didn’t have.

I’ve said before that I think envy can be a really good thing if it motivates you to take action. So I’m looking at these shows and some of the shows that I listen to, I started listening to Startup which is this really cool public radio feel, like whole other level in terms of the quality but I’m looking at it going, “Well that’s really interesting and I love the way they’re doing this and they’ve got this hooks and they’re telling this one story, their Serial which is incredible and hard to match.

There’s another show I listen to called 99% Invisible where all they do is tell this sort of geeky stories about how things get made basically. Part of me is going, “Why are these guys being successful? What’s wrong with me?” And then I go take an honest listen to one of our shows and I go, okay, I kind of get it. They’re putting in 20 times amount of work that I am so it makes sense.

Again, just trying to make it better and also trying to make it what it is, what it’s supposed to be, not what I would like it to be. I’m not trying to make the next, This American Life but I had some interesting take away. So the first thing I heard was I said, “Thinking about this, do you listen to it, what should I do better? If you don’t listen to it, what would you want in a podcast? First person says, could you share the link and the focus of it?”

[0:13:18.4] AT: Which pretty sure that implies they don’t know what you’re talking about, right?

[0:13:20.7] JG: Right. Dr. Laurel Sheller said, “Wasn’t where you had one but we’ll take a listen,” and this was the first thing that I saw was lots of people saying I never heard of it before. I love to hear about this and as people said, I listen to it and enjoyed it. Karen on twitter at the remote coach, “I didn’t know you had one either. I’ll have to follow now. Do you mention it in your emails?” Around this time, you and I are having this back channel discussion where a few weeks ago I asked you for a feedback and what we could do better with the show and I don’t know if you remember this, you mentioned email. Are you really pushing it?

I wasn't. I think the reason for it is because it's been this work in progress, the podcast started, you were at this conversation, we had breakfast with Charity Slade, he said, you should do a podcast, he was going to help me do it, you were there for it because you and I were doing audio content together for Tribe Writers and so Jared and I started this thing together, we did maybe 20 shows and then he moved on to some other stuff because he had a lot on his plate.

Then we just kind of kept going, you ended up taking over as cohost and it was always this thing that I was trying to dial in but I didn't quite — I didn't know what I was doing because I was just kind of doing a lot of different things and I saw other people doing very focused things and I didn't want to get pigeon holed into doing one thing. I didn't want to just be a podcast about writing for example although I knew I could do that.

I wanted it to really embody the kind of life that I was trying to live and we could talk more about that but in two years, I've never felt like a book, like you spend a year writing a book and then you go, everybody go read this now. I feel that way, I'm excited to share it and almost like push people to go read it. I've never felt that way about the podcast, maybe it's because the lack of feedback, because I have been sort of lazy about the shows themselves and what I've got to the table. That was a good piece of thing.

[0:15:26.6] AT: How do you win in podcasting? I mean I think that's the other thing. If you ask 10 different people, what a success in podcasting? You're going to get different answers and for you, some people would say, do you get sponsorships? Some people it's number of downloads. New and Noteworthy. I know people that just -- they love to point out that they're a new noteworthy and I go, "Okay great. How do you feed your kids?"

Other is, do you get feedback from it? Are you proud of it? Does it feed into your business? If you don't establish those things and you really — we weren't really, haven't been really chasing anything specific. It's hard to feel like you're victorious when there is little feedback right?

[0:16:09.5] JG: Yeah, I think that's been the hardest part is staying excited about something where we've not gotten a lot of feedback. Doing this experiment over the weekend and saying, "Hey, do you listen to it?" We got a lot of feedback, I would say over a hundred responses on

twitter, Facebook, Instagram. 30 to 40 per medium and it was just like, “Hey, what do you think about this?”

The first response that I got was, “I didn’t know you had one.” That was, “Okay, that’s something we could do better, we could just let people know and I think monetization, new and noteworthy, all those things you talked about as potential targets are nice and I don’t mind getting there eventually, that’s not my primary goal.

My primary goal is to create something that I can be proud of. As idealistic as that sounds, it really is what I’m trying to do because it really doesn’t cost us much money to put this on. It’s you and I in an office together, I spend \$400 bucks...

[0:17:11.6] AT: This is my microphone.

[0:17:12.8] JG: ...on a microphone, you’re using your own microphone.

[0:17:13.8] AT: I’m loaning you — everything on my side of the table is mine.

[0:17:17.8] JG: Yeah. It doesn’t cost — we’re not running on a studio or anything. Maybe we should. The point is, it doesn’t cost us that much so I’m not worried about covering overhead cost for this. I want to make something that I’m proud of, at least in terms of the quality of the content.

It’s not that like we put together crap for you, it’s just that you get something to 80, 85% and it’s basically shippable but when I write a book, I don’t stop there. I keep focusing, obsessing and work weekends and nights and I become unbearable to live with as we get to the end of the project completion and then it’s done.

It’s not perfect but it’s done. And I go, “Holy cow, everybody needs to pay attention to this.” I would like to feel that way about the podcast because I think if you do something, if you put that kind of work into a project like that. It has the opportunity to make money, it has the opportunity to reach more people but there’s that old saying that bad marketing makes — there’s that old saying.

[0:18:21.2] AT: Good marketing makes bad products feel faster.

[0:18:23.5] JG: That's right, you stole my fender. Yeah, good marketing makes bad products fail faster. Thank you for that collaboration. That was like thing one was realizing that a lot of people hadn't heard about it and that's on me to create a better show and then B tell people about it. So I think we'll have to come back to that in terms of what we're going to do with that but that was the first surprise. The second one was, this was nice and it was people like it, a lot of people like it.

[0:18:57.4] AT: Like every show like it.

[0:18:58.5] JG: Yeah, right. You mentioned that earlier. There's lots of people who go, "I listen to every single show."

[0:19:04.2] AT: That's crazy, you think about this, the shows are 20, 30 minutes long, some of them are longer, some are interviews longer but the idea that — I mean I have really good friends like you that I go, did I spend 30 weeks for Jeff this week? No.

[0:19:18.5] JG: Right.

[0:19:19.2] AT: This week we did, over the last month. Those people are hanging out with us, there's 30 minutes a week. That's an investment.

[0:19:30.6] JG: If you think like the average episode is about half an hour because some run an hour with the long interviews and some of these shows that we do are 20 minutes, that's a hundred hours. That's a lot. So here's some feedback that I got. Christine said, "I have it on every morning while I work because I'm catching up on the feed. I'm a big fan."

Bas ,which is a cool name, "I listen to every episode, I love it, most appreciate the episodes where you interview someone who has a true portfolio life who is doing great work in more than one field. In some interviews, it's harder to see a true diverse portfolio." I want to come back to that because that's kind of the third take away.

GPW36 on Instagram says, love the podcast, keep it up. I listen when I run. Daniel said, I just listened to my first episode, he said he was a little bit confused because he thought I was a guest because you and Andy start the show so I thought that was interesting.

[0:20:25.5] AT: Jeff is in charge, let's just state that for the record.

[0:20:28.0] JG: That was interesting. It's interesting feedback as we look at all the things that we could do better. Yeah. That was some people on Instagram, on Facebook, a lot of people said, I love it." Mostly. Carol said, "It would be nice to hear something specific to those of us in middle age," which I found kind of fascinating.

[0:20:47.7] AT: Aren't we middle age? I am.

[0:20:49.8] JG: You are, I'm not. I'm almost 33.

[0:20:53.9] AT: I'm 38 for the record. Just getting started too.

[0:20:57.1] JG: I'm looking forward to middle age when my voice stops cracking and I can grow a mustache. Maybe people will take me seriously then.

[0:21:04.3] AT: Maybe.

[0:21:05.4] JG: Maybe.

[0:21:05.6] AT: We'll let you know.

[0:21:06.9] JG: Yeah, Sara said I recently stated listening to it and I love it. I think that's interesting. That was surprising to me that a lot of people actually like it.

[0:21:16.1] AT: They listen to every show. I assumed there is people that read every code and blog post, they listen to every song on every record that Sarah Grove has done or whatever. Pick your favorite musician.

[0:21:29.8] JG: That's yours.

[0:21:30.3] AT: That's mine. Because we don't know that, we don't have a way of knowing that people are — so we start asking ourselves question like, how can we keep that feedback loop going so that when people find value, they're telling other people about it or they're just letting us know, here's my take away.

Because we want to selfishly maybe.

We just want to know that this is helping. We want to know that... I don't know the other name but she listens every week, we want to know like great, you listen to it, getting ready for work. What are we doing well, what take away do you have because we want to do more of that.

[0:22:09.9] JG: Yeah. That was a second take away. For me it was, people actually liked it, that was probably the majority opinion, I didn't hear anybody say they hated it probably because they stopped listening.

[0:22:18.8] AT: Let's talk about that real quick if that's okay. I think it's safe to say because of the mediums and because of just people... There are some people that just don't like to show and maybe you'll listen to it and they stopped but they didn't get feedback because they don't want to be mean when everyone else is being so nice.

[0:22:35.1] JG: Yeah, of course. I was surprised. I thought we'd hear...

[0:22:38.2] AT: They're not listening right now.

[0:22:41.9] JG: I thought we'd mostly hear crickets and I heard a surprising amount of people. I assume somebody would go, "Oh, that's good, keep it up." I kind of assumed it would be in the spirit of, You're doing an okay job, keep at it buddy. That's kind of how I feel about it. I keep doing it.

[0:22:56.7] AT: Your tone and kind of your head tilt was like, to your dog, your kid. Keep trying pal.

[0:23:02.0] JG: Very condescending. That's the voice that talks to me when I got the gym, you'll get there man. You'll be able to do pull up at some point.

[0:23:11.2] AT: Don't look at that guy.

[0:23:13.3] JG: Little steps.

[0:23:14.2] AT: God gave him a different body built.

[0:23:15.4] JG: It's like little steps. I feel like I'm like walking around the block, walking around two blocks. Going for a jog, I'm working up to the half marathon in terms of the podcast. When people said, "I love it, I listen to every episode that caught me off guard in a good way. What I realize, because when I started listening to all this great podcast that we're basically doing investigative journalism for radio journalism on podcasts. I was like, "I need to do that." I realized that there some really good things...

[0:23:46.1] AT: How are we going to do that...

[0:23:47.1] JG: Yeah. Why am I qualified to do that? There were some really good things that we were doing that I was overlooking that we need to continue and I think we'll talk about that at the end of the show.

The third take away, the third surprise that I had and again, like the first one, it wasn't that much of a surprise but it was good to affirm because I had sort of forgotten this was what — I think it was Bas said, some interviews are better than others but it's hard to see a true diverse portfolio with some of these people and Christie said the same thing.

She said, I'll add the things that are working well, length is perfect, it makes the messages digestible. Andy is fantastic and your energy is palpable.

[0:24:35.6] AT: I like her.

[0:24:37.6] JG: That's Christie Cologne. She's a good writer. Christie was here I think is her blog. .com.

[0:24:45.4] AT: That's right.

[0:24:46.5] JG: Yeah, she's a great writer. That hit me in a good place because it made me realize one of the things that all the podcast that I listen to and admire her do is they make a promise to the listener and they never veer from that promise.

They try to stay very focused and whatever the core thing is, what I kept hearing from friends that I didn't like was what's the show about? Well, you know, it's sort of about this and stuff.

[0:25:15.9] AT: Did you have flash backs to the start up? Was it the startup life? Is that what it's called?

[0:25:19.3] JG: Startup life.

[0:25:20.4] AT: When he's trying to explain his business. It kind of does this but like this better. Explain your band. That's our band.

[0:25:29.1] JG: Yeah, that's actually a pretty good description.

[0:25:32.0] AT: You struggle with explaining the promise right?

[0:25:35.0] JG: What I didn't want to do is I didn't want to get pigeon hold. I'm talking to Grant Baldwin and he's like, who is it for, what is this about? Dude, don't do that to me, don't make me niche down, I don't do that.

[0:25:48.8] AT: I'm not even nicheable, you can't niche me.

[0:25:51.6] JG: I'm unnicheable.

[0:25:52.5] AT: Unnicheable sounds better. We may have our title for our show. The Unnicheable show. Are we unneachable?

[0:26:00.1] JG: That's a pretty — I'm going to combine that, I might go buy that domain. What I wanted to do because we talked about this over lunch and I'll just share what I told you is I think you said it was good. What I wanted to do was I wanted to create a window into the life of a writer or a creative or an entrepreneur even.

I wanted people to see the things that they don't normally see and what it means to live a portfolio life is that you do not just do one thing, you do a few things and you manage them in a creative way. So what I think is fascinating and a lot of people don't realize this but writers don't spend all day writing and speakers don't spend all day speaking. Entrepreneurs may have hobbies that have nothing to do with their business.

All of these things, I think contribute to the person you are in the life that you're building but I think especially in the world of making it as a creative, there's all these things that you have to do. You have to have diverse streams of income, you have to have multiple things going on and my life doesn't look the way people think it does because I'm a "writer". It's not bad.

But I just wanted to give people a look into that for two reasons. One so that people would go, "Wow, I don't feel alone anymore, I get that," or two it would give them something to aspire to that doesn't feel to out of reach if that makes sense and the portfolio life is this idea that you're not going to be a jack of all trades but you're going to be a master of some. You need to know about marketing and you need to know about business and you need to grow your craft.

I could have just did a show about writing and interview lots of writers but there are shows out there that are doing that pretty well and that wouldn't be an outlet for me. That would be me talking about the things that people want me to talk about all the time and I wanted to have a place where we could bring diverse people and ideas and topics together in sort of a melting pot and then walk away with these practical take away.

I think when we've got that dialed in, I think we're doing that well. But I think because do you have a portfolio life as you can kind of do a lot of things. I use that as a license to do a lot of

things with the podcast and interview a lot of friends or people without staying true to that theme.

So when I heard that feedback from several people, somebody said, "I didn't know what this meant until I read the book *The Art of Work*," which there's an entire chapter about the portfolio life and they actually started the show before the book came out.

Really because what I wanted to do was I wanted to talk about this and then have the book come out and reinforce it and people will be like, "Oh he's been talking about this for a while." I don't think it's been as central of like a thread or theme to the show as maybe a could or should have been.

[0:29:04.5] AT: Yeah, I want to encourage your thinking in another way that we can frame this if we're being honest, this is going to sound redundant, but it is that we want to have more honest conversations about what it means to really be a writer. And to be honest, this conversation is to say that you don't write all day, that nor should we write all day. That's for the movies.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm writing today."

"What are you doing tomorrow?"

"I'm writing."

That only happens when you have a deadline. If you write all day then you better just write about writing all day because you're not living life. The challenge for us is how do we have conversations that people can connect to and can be helpful to them that are four people who are mostly writers but aren't about writing.

I'll tell you this, people will and I've seen it because I always try to defend my friends on social media which could maybe be bad but I see people have push back against you and other people they go, you don't make your living as a writer right? This show as a defence of that, I think it's an explanation of most people don't make their living just as a writer. There are other things that are a part of life.

I think we've got production things we can up, I think we also just need to decide what's the promise and so people know that we're going to deliver on that and then make it wide enough that it's not boring. They're not going to go, "Well this is our runway and our runway is — or our street and it's a one way, it's really small, it's a one way," and I still feel like we've got a lot of work ahead of us.

[0:30:41.3] JG: Yeah, I agree. If I had to sort of decide today, I would say what I wanted to do was create an outlet where I could talk about the things that maybe I don't have opportunity to talk about elsewhere. Things like entrepreneurship, marketing even, sort of personal side of things and how all of that fits together. I like what you said, "It's no excuse, it's an explanation."

I wrote in the art of work that most people living their "dreams" and I put that in quotation not because dreams don't exist, but because that doesn't look the way that you think it does and I find it very freeing. I found it very freeing when I realized the norm is that they live this thing called a portfolio life where it's lots of things. Lots of things sort of cobbled together. Make this career that is your levees work. I think the good news is for many of us, this ends up being the most fulfilling way to exercise your gifts and in a lifestyle and in a way that allows you to make a living.

[0:31:47.4] AT: The beauty of what you just said, and if you didn't listen really closely till the last 60 seconds, I encourage you to scroll back and listen to what Jeff just said. The beauty is that that's honesty. When most people ask me what do you do? The first three words that come out of my mouth are, "Lots of things. Lots of things." That's okay, it doesn't mean you're a failure if you're doing lots of things.

It just means that you don't say — I used to say, "I'm a writer," and now I say, "I do lots of things." You might just say, "I'm a writer," because it's simpler. The reality is, writers don't just do one thing. You do a lot of things and that's good. We're not going to tell people what things they have to do but I love the idea that people can feel like they can do many things and we're going to help them in a lot of different areas and that they're still being intellectually and artistically honest instead of selling out.

[0:32:44.3] JG: Yeah. I mean I think you lose certain segment of the audience when you say this, but so be it. This is not a show that's going to teach you how to make more money doing X. Speaking, writing, whatever. Or it's not just going to do that and it's not a show that's going to teach you how to build a team or get 100,000 subscribers on your blog or any of that.

We talk about some of that stuff but I think the promise is here's how to manage a creative career well. So what are the things that I have to think about on a daily basis? What are the things that lots of my friends and peers have to think about on a daily basis? How do I not suck at what I do? How do I network with the right people so that I have an opportunity to even share my gift with the right people so that people talk about it?

How do I pay this month's electric bill? How do I do something now that will make me money next month so that I can spend the next month writing? How do I get up tomorrow and actually write and not think greedily about how I can do something now that will make me money three months from now and all that stuff is tension right? It's all managing tension.

How do I not sell out, as you said, and how do I not starve? For me, the creative life has always been living in that tension and I'm speaking candidly as the breadwinner of the household. I think there are lots of people who talk about creativity as this mystical, magical thing that you get up and you do your morning pages or like...

[0:34:20.6] AT: You light a candle and then it appears.

[0:34:23.5] JG: I don't like denigrate that at all, but creativity is the way that I make a living. I am at a risk to live in this tension between making money off of my art, so to speak, and still being true to the art itself. There's tension there. I constantly feel the tension between, "Don't starve, do these things, you have these opportunities so that you don't starve."

But at the same time, once this ball starts rolling down a hill. It's hard to stop or get out of its way and all of a sudden you're like, "Well I'm doing this because I got to make a living," and you get so far away from your true self that you go, why am I even doing this.

[0:35:09.7] AT: "Oh my gosh, I'm a marketer, that's what I do."

[0:35:12.1] JG: That's right. "All I do is talk about the thing that I do, I no longer do the things that I do," which I think is very dangerous and common.

[0:35:19.3] AT: Sorry.

[0:35:20.5] JG: Yeah. I think what I wanted to do with the show a hundred episodes ago and it's been helpful to sort of come back to the true north is, here's a look into what a creative career. Not just a life but a creative career looks like. So if you're an entrepreneur, great. But this is going to have a creative bend to it. This is a show for makers and creative and artist and writers and people who make stuff and try to put it out in the world, probably without thinking a ton about how am I going to make money off of this.

But then after you put it out there you go, "Oh yeah, do I make money off of this?" Maybe you have that intentionality going into it but for me it's always been, how do I make important stuff and how do I make a living? And The Portfolio Life is a solution to that. There's segmentation but there's also — there's overlap in this different areas of life that all kind of fit together.

[0:36:24.5] AT: The goal is never simply to make money but you also need a way to do that, right? The goal is if you didn't sell your books, you probably would have a great journal because you like to write, you like to express yourself in that way. We don't, again, this is the fear. The fear is we don't want it to just become "here's how to sell your stuff" even if it's junk.

I honestly think there's a lot of shows out there that say, "You don't have to be an expert, you can do this in three days. Throw it up there, have someone format it for you on Fiverr. Yaddah, yaddah." There's that way of "find the right category and you'll be the best seller and you can tweet that out and people will make it free for four days and here's the formula." It's more complicated than that.

My hesitation, and I share this at lunch and I'll share here, is that if we're going to do a show that's really interesting to people then I think we're going to end up talking about how messy and difficult it really is and I think people will enjoy that thoroughly but to go deeper than we have been is going to require, I think, us talking more, you having longer interviews and then trimming

the fat to find the good stuff in there but I think that to get better we have to and you will just need to go deeper.

[0:37:43.4] JG: Yeah, I think we have people interested in it, we have to be interested in ourselves. I want to create something that I find interesting. Okay, so along those lines as you're talking, I had this thought. What if every episode, whether it's you and I talking or me interviewing somebody, what if it was like a problem, like a dilemma?

If you think about storytelling, storytelling always begins with conflict. If we're talking about the portfolio life, which is how do you manage these different aspects of a creative career? And I think about those in terms of work, home life, play, purpose and there was something else?

[0:38:25.5] AT: That's all of them.

[0:38:27.8] JG: I forget my own little construct.

[0:38:30.0] AT: It's in your book, I'll buy you a copy.

[0:38:32.9] JG: Buy me a copy. Every time, there's tension in all of those things. We've talked about some of these things. How do you do what you love and not flake out on your family, right? That's a problem and you got to work through that. How do you do good stuff without selling out? And how do you not starve? And how do you...

[0:38:49.7] AT: Need do you make sure you build in rest and place where you're creative and you have new ideas.

[0:38:53.1] JG: Right.

[0:38:53.5] AT: Not just working all the time.

[0:38:55.1] JG: I don't know, what do you think about that idea?

[0:38:58.5] AT: I love the idea because I think, like you said, great stories — who is the characters? And then you bring in the tension, right? I'll tell you, I was listening to an episode of a show today and I didn't finish it for this reason. Not our show. There are shows where it's just like, "Hey, you're awesome. No, you're more awesome, no I mean really, your show's great, no your show's great. I love meeting you at the conference and you're just great. No, you're super great."

[0:39:26.7] JG: Just buddies.

[0:39:27.9] AT: "Okay guys, can we maybe get something that's going to help me? Okay, we established you're both awesome." The funny thing is, most time, those people are awesome but what about us, what about the listener and what problem are you going to help me connect with? Maybe not solve, but closer to solving. I like the idea of maybe one of the rules of the show? We always have tension.

I mean isn't that the promise of Serial, right? There is this tension of what's the truth. Every episode will maybe get you closer to that and I like the idea because people are sharp when there's tension. Meaning, the guest you're interviewing, "Hey, we're going to tackle this today, this question," and you have to tackle attention versus here's a flattery promotion show.

[0:40:17.0] JG: Yeah. Absolutely, somebody on...

[0:40:20.4] AT: Is that where you're going with it?

[0:40:21.6] JG: Yeah. Somebody on Facebook said to me, "Hey, I can tell when you're not that interested in the guest or in the subject," and I was like...

[0:40:33.1] AT: That was honest.

[0:40:34.4] JG: I was like, "I thought I faked it pretty well."

[0:40:37.9] AT: Yeah Jeff wasn't mad because you pointed out, he's mad because he thought he faked it better.

[0:40:41.9] JG: No, I mean it was really interesting because I don't feel like I'm doing that but that was an interesting perspective and...

[0:40:48.1] AT: But you never feel like that with This American Life, "Well they really doubted/called in on that one." Every show it's like, it's sharp.

[0:40:57.1] JG: Yeah, I think there's something to be said about going to the edge which is not just bringing on the same kind of guest that everybody else is bringing on or asking them the same questions. The hardest show I was ever on, hardest interview I ever did was on Mixergy where the host, Andrew, asked me all of this really hard questions and then like I answered them, I was waiting...

[0:41:21.3] AT: It's slightly inappropriate, I don't mean like dirty but I mean like deeper than even normally ask people, and it's like, "Dude, this is recorded, right? This is on your show?"

[0:41:29.6] JG: I mean it wasn't even that, it was like — I was talking about my book and he had read my book and had notes. "Okay, on page 34, you say this." Most of the time people do that, they just read the questions that you gave them to read back to you and you give them the talking points.

I sort of assumed this was the direction which it was going to go and I said, "Yeah." And he said, "Yeah but you don't really buy that, right?" He started listing all these examples of things when that doesn't work. I was like, "Oh, I'm going to have to defend this."

[0:42:04.7] AT: "Well aren't you here just to flatter me and tell people to go to buyJeffsbook.com?"

[0:42:10.4] JG: Right, exactly. Here's what happened, right? Two things happen, one, that's not his job. His job is to serve his audience by giving them no fluffy BS content that's going to help them. The other thing that happened as a result of it — I think he did that job. The other thing that happened is I respected him more because he made me defend my beliefs, my content, my

ideas. And I do believe in them otherwise I wouldn't put them in a book. That also made me honest, it made me go, "Well maybe not always but a lot of the times this is the way it works."

[0:42:42.5] AT: Would you consider having — and I thought about doing this. There's actually organizations that do this, they try to bring people together with opposing views and try to be the moderator and the conversation. And be like, "We're going to bring civil conversation to this topic. Not cable news."

[0:42:58.0] JG: Right.

[0:42:58.6] AT: There's no commercials, right? "We're going to go 45 minutes." Do you think the attention is you could try to find people that as a reminder, this is totally unscripted. That you could go find people that maybe you disagree with that they wrote something and you go, "Totally disagree, you want to come in my show and talk about it?" Why do people watch boxing? Because one person's trying to knock the other one out. That to me would be interesting.

[0:43:21.2] JG: Yeah.

[0:43:21.8] AT: It's tension.

[0:43:22.3] JG: That's cool, I like that. I think what we need to do is we need to sleep on it and I think we need to talk about where we're going next with this. I think what I still don't have clarity on is the format. I think that that's been confusing, I think the promise needs to be more upfront, I think we've gotten some good thoughts on that.

[0:43:48.7] AT: I want to dig into the promise real quick. The promise to me almost has to be, has to do with the tension because there was just this promise of like, "We'll uplift you," that's just not — that's why the cereal's so interesting because it's like the promises we're going to tackle something that's really complex, right? So I wonder if the promise has something to do with the tension. I don't know

[0:44:09.5] JG: Yeah, well I like the idea that you're letting people see something that they don't normally get to see hopefully and I think creative careers don't look the way that we think they look, whether that's being a writer, creative entrepreneur, full time artist, musician, that sort of thing.

I want to talk about these things. I want to talk about the things that aren't the art side of things like almost the noncreative side of things that make the creative stuff possible. Because that's not really talked about and nobody told me this stuff. Nobody told me, I've got to figure out how to market myself if I want to have snowball's chance in hell.

[0:44:47.9] AT: I was going to say, food.

[0:44:48.7] JG: Yeah.

[0:44:49.6] AT: I just want to eat.

[0:44:51.0] JG: Of making it. Yeah.

[0:44:52.0] AT: I wonder if that even add in the show subtitle, whatever, an honest view, an honest conversations, whatever it might be and yes, that implies that some other shows or whatever, aren't honest, whatever. The point is, we're going to make a promise that we're going to be honest so we have to fulfill that.

[0:45:08.9] JG: I also think that we do give people take away. I think that that's part of...

[0:45:12.7] AT: That was a — yeah, good pick up. That's something else that people go, "Hey, I really like it when you tell us something to do instead of just yak for 30 minutes."

[0:45:21.7] JG: Yeah, I think conversation is really this overused word in the podcast. We're just going to have a conversation, which means "We're going to waste your time and we didn't do our work."

[0:45:28.9] AT: Which means we did not prepare.

[0:45:30.7] JG: I don't want to do that, I really want to honor the audience's attention. Yeah, I think we're going to leave it at that. So you're listening to this, this is Episode 100, this was an unscripted look at The Portfolio Life, what we set out to do, what we feel like we didn't do as well as we could have and what we want to do better in the future.

If you have feedback for us about this show, you can tweet at me @jeffgoins or email me, Jeff@goinswriter.com with tips, feedback, good things, bad things. I think we have a direction of where we want to go and become a little bit more focused on that. In the next show, I want to talk about what we're actually going to do for the next hundred episodes.

[0:46:15.4] AT: Yeah. I want to add on this bit to the email. I don't think you can be too specific in your feedback guys. You can only be too vague, "Go get 'em fellas." Tell us specifically what was good about our ideas and where did you go, there's a lot of stuff we're going to put out there, we're still wetting it, we're not so sure we're untouched marble in some way and Jeff is not afraid to say, "I want to make this better and if it looks totally different, who cares? We want it to look good, sound good, be helpful." Please take Jeff up on that and maybe let's do a subject line, consistency, Portfolio Life Feedback. Can we do that Jeff when they email in.

[0:46:58.3] JG: Yeah.

[0:46:58.9] AT: Portfolio Life Feedback just to kind of filter through those and then yeah, on twitter you can use the #portfoliolife and @jeffgoins and yeah, we want feedback, we want to be helpful and I think that you've offered a lot of good ideas Jeff but we don't do this for us, we do this because people listen.

[0:47:17.4] JG: Yeah, well we do it both. Like it needs to be fun but it needs to resonate and when it's fun but it's not resonating, we might as well put the microphones away and...

[0:47:27.2] AT: That's kind of where we've been, it's resonated some and it's been okay.

[0:47:29.7] JG: Yeah, right. So I think yeah, I think the feedback has been great, thanks for that guys, we want to invite you into this process and then we're gonna review that and then come

back with a list of what we want to do with the next hundred episodes and just be a lot more intentional with that and a lot more true to that because I think, whatever we do, as long as we stick to it, it's going to give people a sense of "okay I know what to expect" versus "what's going to happen this time?"

[0:47:58.2] AT: Yeah, that's a great word to end on. So Jeff, I just want to personally thank you for being honest about how you're feeling about it and being willing to take something that certainly is not a failure and people are listening and it's adding value but we don't want to do things because they're okay. We want to do them because they bring us joy to create them and they help other people.

[0:48:22.3] JG: Yeah.

[0:48:22.6] AT: We believe that we will enjoy this more, I'm also confident of that and that we will help people a lot more if we change some things, so we're going to change some things.

[0:48:30.5] JG: Cool. Thank you man.

[0:48:32.1] AT: All right, thanks man.

[0:48:32.3] JG: Yup.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:48:33.3] JG: Well that was episode 100. I hope this wasn't a waste of your time, it was helpful to process where I'm at with this and I'm okay with projects ending and I'm okay with changing things and doing things differently than we started out doing them.

What I'm not okay with is standing still. I'm not okay with not improving and I'm certainly not okay with doing something that doesn't serve the needs of this community that we've built. I think the idea the portfolio life is an important one but I am also willing to put something to bed if an idea has run its course.

Where does that leave us? Well, I'd like to hear from you and there's two ways to do that. One, if you've enjoyed this show, whether you're starting from episode one or you joined us just last week for episode 99. I'd like some feedback from you, leaving a review, an honest review. I will read it and I will listen to it and do whatever I can to make this show better and if you go, "Hey, this is great but I think you're done," I'll respond to that too.

Let me know what you think because it's really important to me to get some feedback from you. If you have specific ideas for how we can improve the show, please send me an email at jeff@goinswriter.com. That said, I hope this show has served you in some way and I hope that you have been given yet another step to take in building your portfolio. Thanks and hopefully we'll talk to you soon.

[END]