

EPISODE 104

[0:00:09.2] AT: Welcome to The Portfolio Life with Jeff Goins. Jeff believes that every creative should live a portfolio life. A life full of pursuing work that matters, making a difference with your art and discovering your true voice. Jeff is committed to helping you find, develop and live out your unique world view so that you too can live a portfolio life.

As Jeff and I move closer to recording our 100th episode of the portfolio life, he approached me about making some changes to the show. He suggested we reach out to Jeff Brown, the award winning creator of the Read to Lead Podcast, a former guest on this show and a veteran of the broadcast industry. Jeff also made the decision to record Jeff Brown's critique of the show as a way for you, the listener, to hear our desire for the show to improve and capture Jeff Brown's advice for us to achieve that.

So here is Jeff Brown and Jeff Goins.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:01:07.0] JG: Well, Jeff, welcome back to the portfolio life.

[0:01:10.8] JB: I can't believe you've extended a second invitation. I'm trying to figure out what happened to you that would prompt you to do that.

[0:01:16.6] JG: Well I'll tell you what happened to me, we did this thing which you're aware of where we did an episode, Andy and I, we had lunch and then we did an episode where we were like, "How can we do this better or should we continue this at all?" And we've got a lot of really interesting responses from listeners and everybody I heard from says, "Don't cancel the show."

I guess I said like, "Maybe we should just stop doing this all together?" "No, don't cancel it." It is interesting and I know that you get this from doing radio for so long as there are people out there listening and you have no idea. Every once in a while they kind of come out of the woodwork and that happened when we did this thing and — okay, so two people came out of the woodwork.

One person said, “Okay, you want some feedback on the show?” They said, “Don’t be a jerk,” to me. They said, “Remember when you had Jeff Brown on and you gave him this hard time for not hiring you and you kept barraging him, you were being a jerk.”

[0:02:16.9] JB: Really? Wow.

[0:02:19.6] JG: I know, I thought it was funny but if I was being a jerk, I’m sorry Jeff, I’m glad that you didn’t hire me.

[0:02:27.7] JB: Well that lends itself to part of the reason why. No, I’m just kidding, just kidding.

[0:02:32.8] JG: Well done. The second person that reached out was you, there were lots of people but you reached out and said, “Hey, if you want some feedback, let’s talk about it,” and Andy and I talked and Andy’s listening to this in the background and he and I’ll kind of debrief this one when it’s all said and done. But you reached out and you know, and I think I hope everybody else knows that I have tons of respect for you and the 25 plus years of legit broadcasting experience you’ve had.

So I just thought it would be fun to actually turn this into a show. We were going to do this offline and I thought it would be cool to basically turn this into a show several weeks ago, we got some feedback from the audience and we had several shows already prepped to go but this is kind of us revisiting all that feedback from a month or two ago where people were saying, “Here’s what you could improve upon, here’s what you couldn’t.”

We got some good feedback on that but I just think in general it would be really cool to spend some time with you getting some really great professional feedback on things you like, things we could do better, et cetera. So I just kind of want to have a conversation about that, how does that sound?

[0:03:44.4] JB: That sounds great. Can I ask you a question?

[0:03:47.4] JG: Please.

[0:03:47.8] JB: Are there areas where you yourself feel like you recognize that you're deficient and or areas specific that you want to get better at?

[0:03:57.7] JG: None actually. I feel like — I feel pretty solid, I feel like I'm a 100% out of a 100. I don't know if you know what it's like to feel that way, but...

[0:04:09.0] JB: I don't.

[0:04:09.7] JG: It feels great.

[0:04:11.2] JB: I have no clue.

[0:04:13.9] JG: I was listening to all these NPR shows and I felt like totally deficient in all areas. I really dig this show startup, have you listen to that?

[0:04:23.5] JB: Yeah.

[0:04:24.0] JG: Yeah, that's so good. What's interesting about their shows is they sound so off the cuff and yet there's hundreds of hours of production that have to go into every episode. When you really break it down you're like, "Oh yeah, it sounds like they're just sitting around drinking coffee," but then there's this clip spliced in here and this little bumper and this, this and that. So do I feel deficient in anything?

Well I'll tell you the take away from kind of the audience survey that we did which was really just like Andy and I did a show and we got a lot of feedback, the email comments. People sent me hard copy letters, several letters in the mail. The main things were this, one, stay focused on the show's theme, the Portfolio Life, the idea that to be like a professional creative, you have to do multiple things, not just one thing, that's a whole idea of having a portfolio.

Two, don't fire Andy, which was good because he was on the outs, he was on his way out. No, I guess what surprised me was everybody was really affirming of the more organic conversational, humorous tone, which honestly to me at times felt like just a lack of preparation,

we're just kind of jumping in and doing stuff. Then I think the third piece of feedback that we got that was affirming was the diversity of the show.

I was a little bit insecure about doing interviews and then doing Q&A shows with me Andy. Our format right now is more or less like I do an interview with somebody who's name you've probably heard and then Andy and I do like a Q&A episode where we talk about something that the audience wants to hear about something from the blog, something related to needs that the audience has. Every other one is either an interview or one of those Q&A episodes. So what do I feel deficient in? I just want to do it better and I want to grow the thing.

Speaking candidly, you have an incredibly popular podcast Jeff, the Read to Lead podcast, which I've been on a couple of times and just love and I love how you've taken years, decades of professional experience in radio broadcasting and brought it to podcasting. Then B, how you have like filled a very specific interesting niche, which the first time I heard it, I was like, "Okay cool. It's going to be a podcast for people who want to read books." But fast forward, how long has it been, two years now? Three years?

[0:07:10.5] JB: It's almost three, it will be three in July.

[0:07:13.5] JG: Isn't that crazy?

[0:07:14.5] JB: Yeah.

[0:07:15.8] JG: Isn't it crazy that you get to do this for a living?

[0:07:17.3] JB: You're averaging in appearance a year right now, I don't know if you know that?

[0:07:20.7] JG: I'll hold you to that. But honestly, when it came out I was like, "Okay, all right, whatever." Then we fast forward three years later and you've won this awards and it's doing fantastic and you're getting all these amazing guests. Let me just say, Amazing guest. Once a year, you just hit it out of the park. I'm going to get another email that's going to say, "Jeff, you need to stop being egotistic."

[0:07:45.9] JB: “Stop being a jerk.”

[0:07:48.3] JG: Anyway. Yeah, I don't know? I mean, I think I feel deficient in all areas of life but I'd love to be more professional, I'd love the thing to grow. How do you measure improvement? We'd love more listeners, not that we've heard from the listeners that we have and we're so, so grateful for those who have reached out including you Jeff and said, “Hey, here to help, love what you're doing.”

But I want to do it better, I want to do what we're strong at better and then things that we're not good at, let's scrap those, I love growing, I love doing things better. I had a colleague one time where we were working on this project together and we were probably 10 weeks into the project and so we weren't at the beginning but we weren't at the end necessarily and I said, “Man, this needs to be better and we could do this and we could do this, what about this? Did you read this article?”

He said to me, he said, “I don't understand. This is going really well and people like it and you're getting great responses, what's wrong?” I said, “Nothing's wrong, nothing. But we can always do it better.” That's sort of my take on it, I've gotten some really good encouragement from the audience. I'd love to do the podcast better and I can't think of anybody who is more qualified to go as feedback on ways in which to do that than you Jeff Brown.

[0:09:12.0] JB: Thank you Jeff for saying that, I really appreciate that, that means a lot. No pressure on me whatsoever to deliver here in the next few minutes but...

[0:09:17.0] JG: Fix us!

[0:09:20.0] JB: It's funny though, a lot of the things that I teach, I tell clients that there isn't necessarily a hard, fast measurable ROI on a lot of this stuff. I can say that having implemented many of the techniques I utilized over the course of the last few years and podcasting again radio, I have seen increased listenership over time and an affinity for the work that I do.

I think that's been lived out in the successes of some of those things. One of the first things that I would want to ask you is, when it comes to interviewing specifically, which is one of my favorite things to talk about.

[0:09:54.2] JG: And you're great at it.

[0:09:55.5] JB: Thank you, I appreciate that. Is what level of preparation are you putting into that now, in other words, what's your approach, and when you sit down with someone, what work have you done prior to that moment?

[0:10:08.9] JG: That's a great question. I would say, I need multiple choice but minimal prep. Here's the thing, I think we're all familiar with Jared Easley who does an absurd amount of research and I use absurd in the best connotation possible like, I remember being on his show, Starve the Doubts multiple times and he's asking me questions and I was like, "Dude, where did you find my third grade book report? How did you find that?"

So I don't do that, I hardly ever bring somebody on the show that I am not very thoroughly knowledgeable about or familiar with. I have read their book, I'm familiar with their work, I'd like to ask them questions that hopefully they haven't been asked before. Am I like Johnny on the spot in terms of preparation, probably not? But I tend to not bring people on the show that I'm not familiar with.

Either they're a friend and they're doing interesting work that I want the audience to hear about and I want to help a friend's work succeed, or I'm a fan and I just want to learn a little bit more about it. But I would say in general, I haven't spent hours upon hours studying to be very, very familiar with their work. I don't know that that's a strength of mine necessarily.

[0:11:30.7] JB: Is it safe to assume that you're not a fan of going to the point of writing out your questions, that you're more of "the question comes as it comes" type of interviewer?

[0:11:40.3] JG: What I do Jeff is write before the show, I am pulling up text edit on my mac and writing down a few things that I want to make sure that we talk about and really, I'm a pretty

spontaneous guy. Again, I don't know that this is a strength necessarily. This is just how I kind of operate and while we're talking about it, "Oh yeah, I need to ask this," and I'll pull up the document and I'll input that.

When I'm really nervous and especially at the beginning like when I first interviewed Seth Godin, maybe you know what this is like, part of you just wants to not sound like an idiot to your hero. I think in that striving to not sound like an idiot, I usually sound like an idiot. Just go listen to one of my couple of interviews with Seth Godin. So while I'm talking to him I'm jotting down some notes about some things I don't want to miss.

If I'm really nervous, I write down the questions ahead of time. If I feel pretty familiar with them, I let it roll and usually there is a theme. The theme is, I want to talk about this particular issue, I prep them right before the show and then we roll into it and we have a conversation and I feel like I'm fairly good at coming up with questions on the spot, but I usually have a few prewritten just to make sure that we move through that.

I know that's not your method, I love your method, we actually have a whole separate show dedicated to this that would link to, which I think is incredible. One of the things that I always think about Jeff, when I interview people, since you and I have talked is as the interviewer, you feel like you've got to feel dead space, you feel like you've got to set questions up and debrief the answers. Really, your job is to just setup the next question, you don't have to talk a bunch like I'm talking right now.

[0:13:31.1] JB: I wasn't going to say anything.

[0:13:34.6] JG: I think about that every time including now. Does that answer your question?

[0:13:37.4] JB: Yeah, it does. As I listen and I spent some time yesterday and this morning listening to a handful of portfolio life episodes is as I listen, I often hear a question asked or a part of a question and then it's interrupted sometimes by a minute to a minute and a half of context for that question, necessitating the repeating of the question after all the context.

One thing that can be easy when it comes to that, an easy fix is to simply, whoever is doing the editing in the back end to pay closer attention to that and recognize those moments so that instead, you start with the context and finish with the question rather than starting with a question, having context and the question again. It makes it difficult for the listener to follow and sometimes even it's difficult for the guest to figure out where you're going.

[0:14:28.8] JG: I am aware of that when it's happening. This is me being totally vulnerable. I'm aware of it when it's happening and yet for whatever reason, I feel like I have to do it because really probably what it is I feel insecure talking to the guest and I want them to — if I just ask the question, I feel like, "They're going to think I'm an idiot and I want them to know that I'm not an idiot," or it's not ego, I want to be clear, it's not ego like, "I want the audience to hear my voice."

I think sometimes that's sort of the perception and it's really like I want the guest to have enough context to be able to answer the question. The interesting thing about that is with some exception because I get to sit on both sides of this equation in shows where I'm asking or answering, when I'm the one answering, like, "Dude, just give me a soft ball, give me one question and my job is to frankly take that question and turn that into the answer that I want to give you in a way that of course, answers the question but also helps talk about my book or get back to the point that I feel like I'm qualified to share." So I get, at a very cognitive level, my job is to just ask good questions and they just chill out and let them figure it out.

[0:15:52.3] JB: Really, in an interview context, it's really the guest who is the star right? You brought them on for a specific reason and supposedly they're a level of expertise in a particular area is beyond yours, otherwise why are they there, right? So I think if you can get to a point where, I write down your questions but I do think that's a great place to start and even after doing this for as long as I've done it, I often, in preparation for an interview, will write down the question verbatim how I think it would sound in a perfect world where I could say it exactly like this.

Now I may not actually execute it that way in the context of the show but I write it out how I would want to say it in a perfect world. That's my starting point and I even go so far as to, if I know a question's going to require context either for the guest or for the listener, I'll even write that down how I would prefer to say it if I were to say it just so, just the way I like it.

Now again, I've been doing this long enough that I can look at that on a page and not have it sound like I'm reading it off a page, I can ad-lib in the midst of delivering it and not read it verbatim and not sound like I'm reading it at all, that takes a little bit of effort and practice. But I think it's important to really get the basics down and to actually force yourself to do some of this stuff in order to be able to truly be good at having the freedom to not have to stick to a script. Does that make sense?

[0:17:24.5] JG: Yeah, so tell me, I mean you're great about this, you're insane about the preparation process. Tell me about prep for a show? Say, John Maxwell right? Somebody that you and I both respect and I don't know what it's like to land him on your show, the Read to Lead Podcast, but if it were me I'd be like, "Oh my god, this is amazing, I can't screw this up." So there is that level of nervousness, you don't want to screw it up, reading his book, taking notes, what is their prep for that look like?

[0:17:55.2] JB: For my show specifically, I'm looking at disseminating information specific to the book and so by and large my questions come right out of my reading. I used to approach it such that I felt like I had to read front to back and ask a question out of every chapter and cover the book in its entirety and after a while I kind of let go of that and I thought, "Well that's really not my job. My job is to really give enough information that the listener knows whether or not this is a book they want to pursue further."

Now, my preparation might be anywhere from an hour to three or four hours in reading and I read as much as I need to read to have the number of questions I feel is about right for a show that's the length of my show typically. That's generally 10, 11, 12 questions. So those questions might reveal themselves within the first two chapters where those questions might reveal themselves over the course of seven or eight chapters. Regardless of which it is, that's often times. I mean I've ended interviews saying things like, "Gee, I feel like we've only scratched the surface because every question I ask came out of the first three chapters of this 10 chapter book. What else would you like us to know about it before we move on?"

That's sort of a nice way to put a little bow on the end of it, what didn't we cover that you we wish we would have. I find that for my sake, that's a much more sane way to prepare and

listeners seem to have gravitated to that as well and they get enough to get something out of the episode but they also get enough information to know, “Is this something I want to pursue further? Is this a book I want to buy, is this a book that I need to spend some time in?”

[0:19:36.8] JG: Yeah, I love that. Okay, I’m hearing one to three hours per guest of prep time, usually going through their book for your show, I get that and it’s not about reading the whole book and knowing everything about it. I totally get that like that curse of knowledge thing where you know too much and you’re getting too into the weeds like I did. I did a show recently where I was talking about my book, *The Art of Work* and there’s seven chapters. We actually did this at one point, I think on your show.

We went through in this other show, we went through every idea in each chapter. That’s just, that was too long, we got to like point three and I was like, “We should be done.” It’s just like seven points is a lot of points to remember. Then I recently did a webinar with Jay Papasan who wrote *The One Thing* and he does this one thing webinars and we were talking about *The Art of Work* and he said, “Okay, pick three chapters, pick three ideas that we can talk about in your book that you think would be relevant to our audience?” We did a sort of a pre-show interview and then I said, “Oh, I think these three would be good.” And he said, “Great.”

We did it and it was like you know, a 20 minute interview and we did some Q&A. So I get that whole course of knowledge like it really isn’t about thoroughly knowing everything that they’re about, it’s about setting them up for a few soft balls that they can sound smart and look good in front of the audience and then it’s going to serve the audience and help them figure out whether or not they should read the book or learn more about this person’s work. I hear you, practice, prepare like come with all of your questions prewritten and then use that preparation to spontaneously innovate on top of, okay, I hear you.

[0:21:25.3] JB: That’s a great way to say it, yeah I like that.

[0:21:28.3] JG: I’m going to work on that. What else?

[0:21:30.3] JB: As I listen to your show, one thing that I think is missing that would make it more powerful, and this isn’t something necessarily that listeners recognize instantly but I think

internally, psychologically, emotionally impacts how they interact with your show, it gives it a more intimate feel as they listen. That's getting away from treating the interview segment in the intro and outro of the podcast as separate moments in time.

[0:21:59.0] JG: Okay, explain that.

[0:22:00.8] JB: What I want the listener to feel who listens to my show is as if this thing they're engaging in is happening now as they're listening to it. I want it to feel, even though we all intellectually know that this is recorded, I don't want to do things that remind them that this has already happened and, "Oh, by the way you weren't there. I'm going to let you eavesdrop on it today."

We a lot of times think that as podcasters, the best we have to offer is an opportunity to eavesdrop on the conversation but it's possible to use techniques and tricks if you want to call them that to make the listener feel like they're present. It's the difference between — let's talk about the restaurant metaphor. It's the difference between Jeff, you sitting across from Andy or you sitting across from Paul Jarvis and having a conversation while I sit in an adjacent table leaning in and trying to hear you.

[0:22:51.3] JG: Okay.

[0:22:52.5] JB: You and I sitting side by side and Paul, sitting across from us. When you can make me feel like I'm sitting next to you and I'm being included in the conversation, even though we can't technically talk to one another, I can walk away emotionally having felt like I participated in it even though I wasn't there, and that emotion changes how I feel about our work and how I feel about your podcast.

That can be implemented in some very simple ways. So one of those might be you talking to Paul and maybe I say Paul because I think your latest episode is with Paul. Paul finishes answering a question and you following that question with something like, "If you struggle with the concept of ABC, you're in the right place because that's right in Paul's wheelhouse. Paul help us wrap our head around this concept.

You sort of turned your head and looked at me and talked directly to me, brought me into the conversation by using second person you and your and then referring to Paul in the third person, right? Even though I'm not there, even though Paul thinks you're nuts because you're talking to somebody who isn't there, you do it anyway.

And as awkward as that feels in the moment and probably will the first hundred times you do it honestly, to the listener on the other end, it feels completely natural and suddenly I'm being invited in. Now a secondary part of that, for that to work, it means setting up the interviews in the intro of the podcast, it's not the thing that already happened but the thing that's just around the corner.

[0:24:35.9] JG: How do you do that? Like specifically, tactically like, "I'm going to go do this intro," and I'm going to say, what I would say is recently I talked to Jeff Brown, "Here's my interview with Jeff Brown."

[0:24:50.2] JB: Yeah, it would be as simple as you instead saying, "In just a moment, you and I are going to be joined by Jeff and I'm going to be asking Jeff, I'm going to be asking Jeff about thing A, thing B and thing C. And if there's time, I may even ask him this." That could be something you already know you've asked me.

[0:25:15.1] JG: Right, of course.

[0:25:17.2] JB: Just by that simple technique, you've turned this conversation into something you already did and it's being presented to me after the fact now as a listener into something that you and I, a journey you and I are about to go on together. You're the same you that's talking to me right now in the intro and the you that's talking to the guest in a few moments is the same Jeff. It's not two different versions of Jeff recorded at two different times.

[0:25:44.2] JG: So I go, "Hey, we're about to chat with Jeff Brown, I'm going to ask him about this and this," and then I end that, you know, I'm thinking like tactics and then we go to this interview and then do you just roll in to it?

[0:25:57.6] JB: Yeah, it can be that simple. I often recommend that you give at least two or three take away and that's just simple again is I'm going to ask about this and this, things that you want the listener to know in advance, they're going to learn should they stick around. Then you finish that and then you can literally launch and this part may be recorded at a later time or at that time when you're actually sitting down with the guest or whatever.

Then you just roll right into your introduction of that person. If you can do it like that, then then the two becomes seamless in the entire podcast from beginning to end, feels like one moment in time versus the intro and the outro feeling like one moment in time and the interview feeling like another moment in time. So it completely changes how the listener interacts with the show, how they feel, and how they experienced the show.

[0:26:51.9] JG: What happens if you don't do this? What do you lose?

[0:26:57.6] JB: Well, here is the one caveat, implementing these techniques don't guarantee your success anymore than not doing them guarantees, your failure. But I think if you can effectively implement them over time going back to what I said early on as I've seen in radio and since with my podcast is they are the things, these little things are the things that help your podcast to stand out.

Your listeners won't necessarily know why they come back to yours again and again. Some reasons that will be obvious, others won't. There's something that will draw them to your show that they won't fully understand, and that's okay. They just know that there's something different about it, something that yours does to them that other podcasts don't do. That's all we care about.

It doesn't matter that the listener understands why that is and why that happens. These techniques I have seen again and again over time when implemented effectively and implemented consistently and implemented well create this affinity for you and your content that other podcast can't experience.

[0:28:04.1] JG: I love that. What about the wrap up? So you intro it, then you do the thing and then you typically do an outro. Is there anything that happens in the outro that continues that same continuity that you started in the intro?

[0:28:19.0] JB: Yeah, I mean I think again it needs to be seamless. What I like to do is I think politeness and pleasantries are important and so when we wrap up an interview I thank the guest for their time and for them coming to the show and doing what I've asked them to do, et cetera. They come back with thanks for inviting me, it was a pleasure, loved it, thank you very much and then you just go right to the next thing.

Now that's not necessarily something you do while you're there on a call, you end the call right there or you have a private conversation or whatever it is you do after you do an interview but when it comes time then to record that outro, your pickup in the outro needs to be seamless. It needs to be whatever that next thing is but sounds like in the end like it happened next and in real time, even though it didn't. Does that make sense?

[0:29:11.5] JG: Yeah, let's just be super practical. I go, "Hey Jeff, thanks for doing this," and you go, "You know, my pleasure this was the best interview of my life and I don't think you're a jerk at all." Then we end. What's the next thing I say?

[0:29:32.3] JB: The next thing you could say, which is often in podcast interviews, asked of the guest to share is yourself could instead say, "Hey, if you want to connect with Jeff online, I've included links in the show notes to do just that. Go to goinswriter.com/jeffisawesome or whatever."

[0:29:51.3] JG: That's actually — we're going to go create that URL right now.

[0:29:59.1] JB: Rather than asking the guest to share some of those things, it's funny because when we do that, nobody's going to remember that stuff anyway if they're going to get any of that information — they're driving, they're running on the treadmill, they're not going to write that stuff down right then and there, they're going to go to the show notes page and get it then if at all.

Rather than putting the guest in the position to share something that nobody's going to remember anyway, follow your interview, follow that goodbye with, "Hey, if you want to connect with this person, here's where you can go to find that information." That's just one way to do it but that's the best example I think for just making that transition as seamless as possible.

[0:30:37.6] JG: But really, what's happening is I think we turned off the recorder and then I went and started a new recording and said, "Hey, if you want to hear more about Jeff Brown and what he's about and you want to learn how to do a better podcast, you can check out this. By the way, here is what else we may have going on or whatever."

[0:30:58.3] JB: Exactly, exactly.

[0:30:59.0] JG: I love the idea that it's continuity versus "hey, intro, here is my interview with Jeff Brown." Interview with Jeff Brown. "Hey, thanks for listening to my interview with Jeff Brown, now if you want to go," — I like that. That makes sense it's less jarring for the listener.

[0:31:14.9] JB: Now, another way to do that but it's not a way I recommend in some podcast is we'll do this is they start the recording and while the guest is sitting there waiting, they do the whole intro and then they go to the guest and while the guest continues to wait, they do the whole outro.

Then, that also — people who do that are people who want to just record the whole thing in one shot and be done and it's an expedience type thing. What I'm talking about obviously requires quite a bit more thought and a little bit more work but the end result, to me, is vastly different.

[0:31:46.0] JG: Yeah, I like it that way. I like sort of segmenting it but I didn't know how to sort of connect them as you've prescribed, which I like. Okay, so we're sort of logging this different things that we could do. I'm making Andy write all this things down so we don't forget them. This is good, we want to get better.

I love this, this is your wheelhouse and these are things that we don't necessarily think about and we sort of stumble through but I love the promise that you do this once, maybe you see a result. You do this a hundred times, you see a difference and your audience can't even

articulate it. So this is the fascinating thing for me about doing a show, asking the audience to respond and yet there are invisible things that make a radio show, a podcast, anything that is delivered via audio, especially where they can't see what's going on.

As you know Jeff, that probably is intuitive to you at this point where you do a hundred different things because you're dealing with an audience that can't see you, that's listening to in their car, while going for a run, on the treadmill, walking to work, whatever that make a difference and over time, it's the things that makes your show more accessible than other shows and they can't even explain it. I love that.

Anything else that we've missed?

[0:33:11.9] JB: Yeah, I don't know if I hit on this but when those moments if you do take advantage of them, to talk directly to your listener or sort of take an aside and address them directly in the midst of an interview. It's always important that you talk to one person so that every listener feels as if you're talking just to them. So you don't stop down on them and go, "For those of you listening," or, "If you're listening right now."

You don't use phrases like that because that just reminds everybody that it's not this personal intimate moment. We want to create this thinking or this emotion that this is really personal, this is really intimate and again, this is happening right now. If we can think of an individual and know that when we connect with one person, we're connecting with everybody the same way as an individual. So every single person feels as if you're talking just to them and not some faceless collective that they've been lumped into.

[0:34:11.6] JG: Yeah, I love that. That is so awkward to do though, like when you've got a guest on the show, right? I guess you just do enough time till it doesn't feel awkward anymore, is that how that works?

[0:34:22.2] JB: Yeah, that's another example or another instance where I will actually write that in. If I'm going to ask a question and it often times, find its way into the context. I find that when I do interviews, if I need to give context, the context is often for the benefit of the listener.

What we often do when we don't include the listener is we share all that context with the guest who often times already knows it. For example, it might be something like, "Well in chapter five, you wrote about that XYZ concept and you went on to say," — they know all that stuff, why are we saying that? We're saying that for the benefit of the listener. So my point is tell it to them, give them that information.

[00:35:02.1] JG: Right, right.

[00:35:03.1] JB: In chapter five of his book, Jeff writes about XYZ concept. It's amazing, it's fantastic. Jeff shared that with us in detail, and so the context that's often a red flag if you find yourself telling your guest things about themselves you've already know, you've missed an opportunity to tell it to the listener and thereby including them in the conversation at the same time.

[00:35:26.4] JG: Do you think Jeff that part of the reason that some people, i.e. me, aren't great at this is because, I am just speaking for my own little brokenness and human insecurity. Do you think part of the reason is that the host feels like their job is to impress the guest when really their job is to serve the audience?

[00:35:50.2] JB: I think that can be part of it, the funny thing is though I have found by doing this the way that I do it, I'm often, and then you said as much, I am not patting myself on the back here. I don't mean to but I often find that the guests are impressed by my doing it the way that I do it.

[00:36:08.6] JG: Why?

[00:36:09.7] JB: Because they sense a level, I think, at least this is what they tell me — a level of professionalism that they don't often experience and they walk away and this is especially the case with authors I think, they're accustomed with doing interviews where the individual has obviously not read the book and so I've never had somebody walk away and go, "Well that guy didn't read my book." They know I have done my homework.

I am prepared, my questions are well articulated because I have thought them through. I actually sit down a half hour before the interview begins and I practice them. I put my headphones and I turn everything on, I hear my voice in the headphones, I recreate that entire environment and get to 5th gear, if you will, before connecting with the guest rather than spending the first 20 minutes of the interview ramping up to 5th gear, if that makes sense?

[00:37:00.3] JG: Yeah, that's so interesting. I think that 90% of doing a great interview is just starting with confidence and it's really interesting. I think of like the first interview I did with Seth Godin where I was super nervous. All I really wanted was for him to think like, "Jeff's cool and I want to do another one of these sometime," you know? But speaking from the other side of the microphone I realize that's not what's going on in an interviewer's mind at that time.

They want to get their idea out there right? And if you can make them look good and feel good and set them up to do that well and at the same time serving your audience, you win. It's not about them liking you or thinking you're smart or cool. I have never left an interview where I was like, "Oh Jeff Brown asked me this question and then he spent 90 seconds giving context for the question, and I thought man, that guy is so smart."

I thought, "Wow, isn't he cool that he dedicated the whole show to my book," when we did that thing where we promoted the book and then a few weeks later, you asked the audience what questions they had and we just did the whole show dedicated to the questions that the audience had and we answered those. It was like, "Oh wasn't that cool?"

So it's very interesting for me to approach this as a craft because I live on both sides of the exchange. And I am learning to be a good interviewer, which is really learning how to say less than you think you need to say, setting up the listeners and the interviewee for success and letting them fill in the gaps so to speak but man, this is solid stuff. What else? Did we miss anything?

[00:38:50.9] JB: One thing that I thought of as you were talking that I'll add is often a concern of podcast interviewers, especially when they know they're going to sit down with somebody who has done their share of interviews is, "Oh I've got to make sure that I ask questions that he or she has never been asked."

[00:39:04.9] JG: Aha, interesting.

[00:39:06.4] JB: And first of all, that's impossible unless you are able to listen to every interview that they have ever done. You're likely going to ask something they have never been asked before but you being on that side of the equation can maybe better attest to this than even I can, but I find that guests aren't concerned as to whether or not you're going to ask some of the same questions. They just don't want to be asked the same bad ones.

[00:39:27.9] JG: Yeah. The same stupid ones like, "Tell me about your book?" Like that's the lazy — I've asked that question. That's a lazy question. There is no question that is lazier than that. "Tell me about your book?" "Well let me get it off the shelf and read the back of it because that's what you're making me do because that's what the book is about."

[00:39:53.0] JB: I've even gone so far in a couple of interviews for my research for people that I didn't know very much about is I go and I listen to other interviews that they've done, other podcast interviews, and I have even pulled some questions from those interviews. Now in the moment, I am not hiding the fact that I am borrowing someone else's question.

I might start off by saying something like, "You know, Ryan did an interview recently with so and so on the show blah, blah, blah. Ryan I loved it when she asked you the question about _____," and basically re-asked that question. I don't think there's anything wrong with that but when you find questions that are fascinated that others have asked, don't be afraid to ask those questions and then give credit in the moment as to — don't pass it off on your own if it's not.

[00:40:36.4] JG: Yeah, I think that's cool because for you it might feel a little bit derivative. I always want to be the most original, smartest guy in the room or whatever but for the interviewee, there's a sense of continuity, "Oh yeah, I just did this thing and I get to talk about that and it just builds upon it and I feel like we're moving in a direction that it's not like I'm just the same thing over and over again."

Like when I read a book, we work with a publicist to create a series of questions that radio talk show hosts can ask and you know what this is like because you used to do this, most of these

people don't read the book. They literally read the script that you gave them, right? And it's so funny when I show up on a podcast and I know for sure, the person hasn't read the book, as they're reading the question verbatim.

Which is fine, I don't judge the person. We wrote this question so that I can talk about the things that I want to talk about. But as an interviewer, I've tried to think about like, "What stimulates the interviewee? What stimulates me, as a guest on a podcast or a show?" And it's typically, I feel like they care. I feel like they know me. Like when you and I are talking about something that I have done, you get it. We've hung out, you turned me down for a job like we've...

[00:42:03.2] JB: We just couldn't quite get through it without that coming up.

[00:42:07.5] JG: Oh God. we've got context, you know? It's not like, "Well Jeff, here's my mission statement." We can start at sort of a — we don't have to start on page one. We can start in the middle of the story and move to some place exciting and so I feel most engaged when I feel understood like somebody gets me and we can build on that and go maybe some levels deeper than what we normally get to go than, "Hey, I wrote this book about such and such." Yeah, that's good.

[00:42:38.5] JB: I had a chance to sit down — you mentioned Seth Godin a couple of times. I had a chance to interview him once and one of the questions I asked started off with, "If you didn't pre-order the book, then you didn't get to participate in a live Q&A that Seth just did yesterday. And Seth, one of the questions that was asked really struck me," and then I repeated the question and the first thing out of Seth's mouth was, "And that was the best question of the day," and he was delighted to answer it again to a whole new audience.

His answer included to me a phrase that has stuck with me ever since then, it's a year a half ago from now. He said, "We don't take action because we believe. We believe because we take action. Do first, believe second." And I have tried to live by that ever since and I would not have gotten that wonderful nugget had I not been willing to recognize that here's a great question and it wasn't mine but I'm going to ask it anyway because it's a great question.

[00:43:36.9] JG: Again, that goes back to that idea of being derivative and it's not about "am I the most creative person here right now?" It's really about "what does the audience need?" And even if it's the same question that's already been asked but my audience hasn't heard the answer because my job is to serve them. Again, you're attacking my ego Jeff. Like my job is not to sound smart. My job is to serve the audience.

[00:44:04.6] JB: Right, right. Exactly.

[00:44:05.8] JG: Yeah. That's hard. Hard for me. That's good.

[00:44:10.8] JB: Well you do it so well in other mediums. You ought to be able to do it well in this one too.

[00:44:14.8] JG: It's all insecurity. It's all just like I want to make sure that I'm being understood and what I hear you saying is, "less is more, speak directly to the audience, make the guest feel understood and comfortable so that you can build upon what they have already said or done, don't be afraid to ask old questions if the answers are things that the audience hasn't heard and it's not about doing something brand new, it's about being familiar with what they've done and trying to build upon that in some way so that you become a part of the body of work of interviews or shows that this person has contributed to."

[00:44:56.7] JB: Now see, there is a gift. You just took everything I said and took 45 minutes to say and very succinctly articulated all of it in an easy to remember way. Now that's not easy for me to do at all and you just did it with what seemed like very little effort.

[00:45:14.3] JG: Yeah, well thank you.

[00:45:15.7] JB: You're quite welcome.

[00:45:18.6] JG: What else?

[00:45:20.4] JB: I think that's everything that I would have for you at this point. I don't want to overwhelm you, not to say that there's a laundry list of the things that I think you should be

doing. I think those are the main points that you just summarized and I think that if you'll consider implementing some of those techniques and I am certainly willing to help you along the way as need be if that involves listening to something that you've done and say, "Hey Jeff, I have tried that technique. How did I do at it?" I'm more than happy to give you feedback on how those tweaks can be made.

[00:45:48.8] JG: Yeah, that would be great. I love that. Let's keep talking about it and listener person, human being out there in the universe. I am trying to apply this. This is an ongoing conversation where we are inviting you into this process and Jeff, you have been one of those people and we've received letters and e-mails. It's been really surprising but really fun. I realize that one of the things that I love to do is not to create something or set a vision and say, "Here's the vision, everybody buy into my idea." But rather to just put something out there.

This podcast is that. It's saying, "Hey, here's the thing that's kind of like half formed and I want you to help me finish it," and I feel like this has been a step in that process and I want you who are listening to this, to help us continue to finish this. I love, love, love the Leonardo De Vinci quote, "Art is never finished, only abandoned." We're not going to abandon this show. We want to take it to the next level. But at the same time, we don't have any sort of delusions that we're going to one day finish this. That it's going to be a complete work of art.

We understand that it's going to constantly be an iterative process where we make it better and better as we go but we do want to make it better and we need your help in doing that and so Jeff, I want to thank you for being a part of the community, being a friend in my life who's willing to speak the truth even when I act like a jerk to you, and this have been invaluable feedback, thank you.

[00:47:40.5] JB: Zzzzz... Oh, I'm sorry, did you say something? I dozed off there. No, I'm kidding.

[00:47:55.7] JG: Oh my God, you got your revenge.

[00:48:02.3] AT: Bravo Jeff.

[00:48:05.7] **JB:** You didn't quite know what to think there for a second didn't you?

[00:48:08.1] **JG:** Oh my goodness, well done.

[00:48:10.4] **JB:** Well I can give you a thank you if you want a thank you or otherwise you can end with that.

[00:48:16.3] **AT:** Okay, we're done.

[00:48:19.3] **JG:** Cut the line, thanks Jeff. This was great. Good job man.

[00:48:23.0] **JB:** My pleasure, thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:48:24.1] **AT:** So Jeff, what did you think of Jeff Brown's feedback?

[00:48:28.5] **JG:** I hate it all.

[00:48:29.3] **AT:** How's your ego?

[00:48:30.0] **JG:** It was great. No, I feel good about it. I mean sometimes I can be sort of wounding or whatever and I am all insecure about it but I loved it. I thought it was spot on, it was great, we're going to try and apply as many of these things as we can and we are really interested in just going to the next level with our podcast, with our listeners. We've heard you, we want to continue to do the things that we do that stand out from other podcasts, and at the same time get better with some of the things that we can get better at.

[00:49:04.5] **AT:** Yeah. I did a reader's survey recently.

[00:49:08.5] **JG:** I saw that.

[00:49:08.8] AT: A vast majority of 75%, when I said, “Well how would you like to consume content?” They said audio. 75%.

[00:49:19.0] JG: I met a preacher one time at Cracker Barrel, which is where you meet preachers now.

[00:49:26.3] AT: Yeah, that’s where I go.

[00:49:26.3] JG: He was eating all of our biscuits and he said — we asked him for some advice or something. It was my old boss and me and we met this guy in Florida, in Northern Florida and he said, “You have to raise them on what you win them with. You won your audience with audio, I mean you’re the audio guy, you’re the podcast guy doing podcast for the people. You had your own podcast, and so that makes sense to me that they want to go where they felt like where you initially introduced them to...

[00:50:01.0] AT: Yeah.

[00:50:01.2] JG: ...years ago.”

[00:50:01.4] AT: Yeah, so as we are working to make this show better for you wherever you are whatever you are doing, I think the challenge for us is that The Portfolio Life is, you know, I just want to talk about a little bit of the challenge of the show is the purpose of The Portfolio Life, and I have people asked me this question now, “How do you live a portfolio life?” They’ll ask me, “Andy, how are you living such a portfolio life?”

[00:50:25.4] JG: They don’t ask that. Who asked you that?

[00:50:27.1] AT: They do, I have an e-mail. Someone asked me that one today.

[00:50:29.3] JG: You have one e-mail?

[00:50:30.5] AT: I have several e-mails. I have several, okay? And I will tell you, I have 77 people who filled out, out of the 300 that filled up my reader’s survey, I had 77 because I tagged

them in ConverterKit and I said, “If you want me to follow up with you, put your e-mail in here.” 77 people did, I responded to them and said, “Hey, you said you wanted me to follow up with you. I am, how can I help you?”

Several of them have said, “I just want to know how you live a portfolio life?” And the reason that I bring that up is because they want to know how do you do this thing, but that’s really difficult because the essence, the truth, the reality of a portfolio life is it’s not one thing. It’s not, “This is how you become a blacksmith.” Like no one says, “How do you become a blacksmith?”

[00:51:11.7] JG: Aspiring blacksmiths say, “How do you become a blacksmith?”

[00:51:14.4] AT: But they know, there is a track. If you want to work at the GM plant, it’s a mile from my house, you know how to do that. There’s a place to apply and there’s a spot on the line, there is a wage you get. But how do you live a portfolio life? And I think that’s the challenge of our show and why you and I have had to kind of step back and go, “Okay let’s get some clarity on our delivery, what the audience expects, and then what we’re going to do going forward,” because Portfolio Life, we can go anywhere with this. Some people may go, “Well that’s great, and it’s also difficult and then you wander,” and you don’t want to wander. We want to give you what you want listener.

[00:51:46.5] JG: Yeah, no it’s not great. It’s paralyzing and nobody wants to listen to something that one episode they go, “Oh that was great,” and then the next episode they’re like, “Where are they going with this?”

[00:51:55.8] AT: Yeah, “Why are they talking about this?”

[00:51:56.8] JG: So it’s really this weird tension and living a portfolio life is this way and I write this in *The Art of Work*, you don’t have to be a jack of all trades but you have to become a master of some, and so the idea of The Portfolio Life is you don’t do a bunch of different things so much that it’s really messy. You do a few things well and you don’t have to get pigeon holed in anything but if somebody looks at Andy or Jeff or whomever and they say, “Oh yeah, he’s the guy or the gal that does this, this, and this and it’s really cool because it’s interesting and unique. It’s not just one boring thing but it’s not so many different things.”

[00:52:37.3] AT: Yeah and there's somewhere between there that we could have a show about everything right? And then a show about one thing. We know we're not the one thing right?

[00:52:45.3] JG: Or nothing.

[00:52:46.3] AT: Yeah or nothing.

[00:52:47.0] JG: I think about Seinfeld, "It's a show about nothing."

[00:52:50.5] AT: It worked for them Jeff, why couldn't we do that?

[00:52:53.3] JG: I don't, because there's only one Seinfeld.

[00:52:54.7] AT: There's only one and you and I have also turned on podcast where like, "This is the podcast about nothing, which is why I am not listening anymore." So as we seek to take Jeff Brown's feedback and make the show better and it's form and it's consistency, and I said this to you Jeff. I think you said, "Let's talk to Jeff," and I said, "Okay, let's do that." And I said, "Well, we'll talk about it before we record some episodes," and you said, "No, forget that. Let's just make it an episode." And my thought was, "Well, that's vulnerable," right? So it's sort of like, "Hey, tell me why my baby is ugly," right? And he did and we accept it and we will fix said baby, right?

[00:53:34.9] JG: The good news is that my baby is not ugly. She's beautiful.

[00:53:37.4] AT: Your actual baby is quite beautiful.

[00:53:40.9] JG: Yeah and he was very affirming. No, this is good. We have gotten great feedback from you, the audience and we're going to apply that. What I hear are a few things. One, be you. Don't try to be somebody else. So we're going to be funny and off the cuff and all that. Two, do a better version of you, which is what I heard Jeff saying like there's things that you can do to be more professional to honor the guest's time, to honor each other's time, to

study, prepare and still you can be off the cuff and fun and funny and all of that but be a better version of that.

And then lastly, don't be afraid to talk to the audience like those to me are the big take aways, is own whatever it is that you do and are, find ways to honor the attention that you have and I love breaking that fourth wall with the audience where you say, "Hey, this is for you. This is why we're doing it."

[00:54:33.3] AT: Absolutely, don't you love it when people do that?

[00:54:35.3] JG: Well, you know, like Jeff told this metaphor, this analogy of you're at a café or whatever and you're eavesdropping on this conversation and he didn't kind of take it to this extreme but I thought about it like this like you and I are talking at Frothy Monkey in Franklin and somebody's eavesdropping on.

[00:54:52.7] AT: It happens every time we talk, someone does that.

[00:54:54.6] JG: Pretty much happens all the time, but what if — I mean this is what we would do is we would say, "Hey so and so, join us. Come sit down at the table and hangout."

[00:55:07.0] AT: And they might say, "Well I'm just going to listen." And you go, "Fine, but we can occasionally direct conversation to you," and that's how we want listeners to feel and I will say this, I do feel comfortable directing things to the audience. I will say things like, "Hey, wherever you are, whatever you're doing right now, if you're driving, or if you're working out, if you've got one ear bud in while you're at work, you know, we'll talk quieter so you don't get found out."

But we will direct more to the audience but I think the number one take away for me is we're just going to do some more prep and we have the tools to do that and I would appreciate feedback from the audience about other topics to address more specifically and we'll make it happen.

[00:55:46.9] JG: Yep, that's good.

[00:55:49.3] AT: Great, well Jeff I applaud you for being willing to be analyzed by someone who's brutally honest as Jeff Brown. That was brave and I am committed to making this a better show. I'm grateful that the feedback was to keep me around because I like hanging out with you.

[00:56:02.9] JG: Yeah, that was good feedback. They said, "Don't, don't let Andy go. He's good."

[00:56:07.9] AT: Oh thanks.

[00:56:08.5] JG: Thanks guys.

[00:56:09.4] AT: Thank you guys so much.

[00:56:10.5] JG: This is like The Voice.

[00:56:14.5] AT: Can I...

[00:56:15.0] JG: The show The Voice.

[00:56:16.1] AT: Can I be Blake Shelton? Because I am not cool enough to be anyone else on the show.

[00:56:19.7] JG: Adam Levine or Christina Aguilera.

[0:56:23.1] AT: Yeah, no.

[0:56:25.5] JG: Yeah, so we haven't voted Andy off. Every week guys, we choose. I love this! Every week we decide whether or not we're going to vote Andy off. So every week dude, you've got to come prepped otherwise you're gone. Your job is on the line.

[0:56:41.7] AT: I appreciate the accountability. Thanks everybody.

[0:56:44.6] JG: I like that.

[0:56:45.4] AT: Survivor, Portfolio Life, Survivor edition.

[0:56:47.8] JG: We just gamefied The Portfolio Life.

[0:56:49.9] AT: “Why does Andy sound scared now? Because he is.” Hey everybody, thank you so much for listening wherever you are, whatever you’re doing today. Thanks for listening, thanks for your feedback, we do appreciate you want to invite you to continue to give feedback on Facebook, on Twitter, on Goinswriter.com where we post these episodes and as always, if this has been a help or encouragement to you in any way, we need to play the Apple system, which is to leave a review on iTunes, and they make it hard. I don’t know, but they just do but we appreciate you going through the effort to do that. Thanks Jeff.

[0:57:20.2] JG: Yeah, thank you.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:57:21.2] AT: We’d like to thank Jeff Brown for being on the show today and for his honest critique and as always, helpful coaching and thank you for taking time to listen to the conversation. Every show now has an episode number so it’s easier for you to find and to share the show with others. We invite you to add your thoughts to today’s episode by visiting Goinswriter.com/104.

I’m Andy Traub and on behalf of Jeff Goins, thanks for spending some times with us. Now, go build your portfolio.

[END]