

EPISODE 125

"**JG:** Yes it's noisy today. It's noisier today than it was a few years ago, but there's still one voice missing, and that's yours."

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:21] AT: Welcome to The Portfolio Life Podcast with Jeff Goins. I'm your host Andy Traub. 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's committed to helping you find, develop and live out your unique world view so that you too can live a portfolio life.

Today Jeff and I are back in the studio and we discuss one of the most common, perhaps the most common question he gets, and it is, "Is it too late for me?" Today you'll hear Jeff's answer and learn about a free book called *It's Not Too Late*, which you can actually go get right now at tribewriters.com/ebook.

Here's my conversation with Jeff Goins.

[EPISODE]

[00:01:12] AT: Jeff, thanks for joining me today my friend.

[00:01:13] JG: Thank you for joining me, Andrew.

[00:01:16] AT: Hey, I love the most recent resource you put out on the site. So depending on when folks listen to this, they can find it at goinswriter.com/noisy-world. But it's a book you put out called *It's Not Too Late* and subtitle I love. It's *Build your tribe, serve your audience, and get the attention your writing deserves*, and the premise of the book, *It's Not Too Late*, tell me why you picked that title?

[00:01:41] JG: Well, so I've been getting this question a lot lately. I think more than ever, and we've talked about this before. But the question I get is this, "Is it possible to do what you did today?" The people are asking me, "Is it possible to build an audience through a blog, get published, and become a full-time writer doing the stuff that you did four, almost five years ago? Or not? Is it too late for me?" And it's interesting because...

[00:02:08] AT: And you tell them all, "Yes. It's hopeless."

[00:02:10] JG: Yes, it's hopeless.

[00:02:12] AT: Yeah, no you don't.

[00:02:13] JF: Yeah, so I mean it's a response to that, which is the question, "Is it too late?" You worry, you want to start a blog, you worry that ship has sailed. I talked to a podcaster not long ago and I was telling him about my blog. He goes, "Blogs? People still blog? People still do that?" And I was like, "I think so, yeah." And obviously the world is changing, the internet is changing, that's always the case. And I just wanted to respond to that question, "Is it too late to start blogging? Is it too late to start writing and getting your work out there? Is it too late to make the transition into becoming a full-time writer?"

And the answer to that is, no, it's never too late to do that. However many books, and voices, and blogs are out there, yes it's noisy today. It's noisier today than it was a few years ago, but there's still one voice missing, and that's yours. There's still one story that we haven't heard, one message that we haven't seen, and I'm not about contributing to the digital clutter that is filling our inboxes and internet, but at the same time I believe that everybody's got a really interesting, compelling, and original story to tell and to share, and that's their own.

So I don't think it's too late because you still have a story to share that maybe you haven't shared yet. And, because every single year I see it happen. I literally see hundreds of people become full-time writers, following this process, this method that I've been taking people through for about five years now.

[00:03:49] AT: So the resource also includes a video with Sandy Kreps, right?

[00:03:54] JG: Yeah. So there's several case studies that I've been pointing to lately. One is a guy named David Mike who recently self-published a book, did not have a huge e-mail newsletter list. Had a few hundred people on his list and launched this thing and it became an Amazon bestseller. Like a legitimate bestseller. It was like in the top 100 books on Amazon, it did amazingly well, and that was a recent success case study.

[00:04:19] AT: Yeah, talk about using your story. I mean...

[00:04:22] JG: Yeah.

[00:04:23] AT: Wow.

[00:04:23] JG: Yeah, he was a convict. He went to prison, and he's a hairdresser now and it was just a really interesting story and in the book is his story. It's a memoir about his own discovery process, his story of faith and redemption. So he's a story, and then Sandy is another recent story. She and I got together and we did some videos, which will be coming out soon, that sort of accompany the book.

[00:04:49] AT: You were really smart to have her on video, because she's delightful. Like I hope you just sort of asked a question and then were quiet for the half hour. Because she is just fun to listen to.

[00:04:59] JG: Yeah, she's very well spoken too. I mean she does a great job of sharing her story, telling it well, and doing it in such a way where people can kind of make connections between her story and theirs. But she's another example of a person who recently did this and started making an income off of her writing and her books and yes, it's possible. I think that there is this sense, any time we see anybody succeed at anything, if we see there's a model that's become popular, whether it's publishing books or starting an online business, or simply just getting into blogging and trying to build an audience around your words. I think once we've

seen somebody succeed at it, maybe even we feel like, "Oh, that person mastered it." We think, "Oh, it's too late for me."

To be honest, when I got into this about five years ago, like really seriously started blogging and going all in on it, I felt that way. I felt like it was too late for me.

[00:05:58] AT: Yeah, it was.

[00:06:01] JG: Yeah, and I mean I think the truth is, is it too late? No. Have things changed? Totally. And so in this book, *It's Not Too Late*, we talk about that. We talk about what still works, and I think the idea here is though the tactics change, the particular strategies on whether or not you use Facebook or Instagram or whatever, those things change with the times. But the principles never change. I think it was you who continued to remind me, what's that quote by Andy Andrews? I mean it's sort of this idea that principles are always true, and when Andy writes his books he's writing them...

[00:06:39] AT: Yeah. That's why they're timeless. Because there's principles. He's got these seven decisions that he writes about in *The Travelers Gift*, my favorite one of his books, and this is a timeless book. It doesn't matter. You have no idea when it was written other than maybe I think the newest reference might be to like Anne Frank when it comes that this person traveling through time and learning lessons from people. But the point is simply that these things are true despite what century or decade you live in and I think that what you've been able to boil down within *It's Not Too Late*, is that the tools will change. Like Snapchat did not exist when you were around.

[00:07:18] JF: Right.

[00:07:19] AT: And Blab was a tool you used. Don't laugh at Blab. Blab was great in it's form, in it's time. But Blab was a tool you used for a time and helped you build your platform, not in the beginning, but it did. Even in the last year, I know you used it. I was there, it helped, and that tool has now changed. But what was the principle behind it? So don't say, "Oh well, Gary Vee did this thing and you can't do that anymore." Okay, but people have not changed. We want

heroes, we want to follow people, we want to read stories, whether they be fiction or non-fiction, and I do know some of these same people, Jeff.

I think another way that this book is going to help those who get it, and again I'll say real quick, goinswriter.com/noisy-world. The book is called *It's Not Too Late*. The other thing it does is it just reminds all of us that these are not, and no offense to the people in the book, or Sandy, or you. But you don't have super powers, Jeff. You're a guy, you're a dad, you're a husband. You know? These are things that happen to normal people, right? Your last name is not Kardashian, right?

[00:08:30] JG: It was. I changed it.

[00:08:31] AT: Right, because that's a pen name, right? So I think that's the other encouraging thing is it's not too late for just people who are just trying. But it's always too late for those who sit out, right?

[00:08:44] JG: Right. Yeah, I mean the book is a very simple structure and these are the things that I think are still true today, which is one, you have a story to tell and you need an audience to listen. So this idea that you could create art, that you could write words, draw pictures, compose a song, and people would magically find it, that's never been true. There has never been some golden age where you as a creative could make something and people would stumble upon it.

What has been true is at times there were patrons that supported artists and at times there were communities that supported the work of writers and creatives. And at other times there weren't, or it was less supportive. But it's never been true that you could just make stuff and people would stumble upon it and give you their time and money for it. You've always had to earn the attention of an audience, and so it's, like you've always had to do that, okay? And that's true today. You've got to earn an audience.

The second thing that we talk about in the book is there is a proven process to do this, and it's simple. Regardless of the technology, you need to create an asset, some place where people can find most of your stuff. A website is a great tool for doing that. In a 100 years, the tool will probably be different but the point is, you need to put your work on display somewhere where people can get access to it. Then you've got to make them aware of that work and try to have a

way of staying in touch with them so that when you have new work to share, they can find out about it.

So, you know, in the 80's when a lot of people say was sort of the hay day of publishing, particularly for fiction writers. When Stephen King and Michael Crichton and those guys were publishing book, after book, after book. I mean Stephen King was writing so many books in a year that he was making up pen names so that he could publish more books. Because if he wrote a book and put it out there, he'd make \$1 million bucks basically. So he was like, "Well I'll just keep doing this because it's fun and it's working." And there was just such an appetite, because that was when kind of paperback novels took off.

[00:10:56] AT: Right, right.

[00:10:58] JF: Like the mass market paperback book that you could buy for like a buck at the grocery store and read it twice.

[00:11:02] AT: Oh, I just had this picture in my mind of this wall of books at the grocery store and it was this golden age of like, "Wow, this is affordable and accessible." And I remember my sisters who are older than me and were reading more in the 80's than I was, but just devouring the books. And for that time, that was the model that worked. So this idea that "well that was the 80's and what happens now?" I mean how much would the people in the 80's, or Stephen King, would have loved to have had Amazon printing their books for them. I mean again, it's like every age could say, we could say, "Well it was so much easier in the 80's. Well it's so much easier in the 2010's." It's like, it just changes, right?

[00:11:41] JG: Yeah. And I mean, Stephen King was writing his novels on a typewriter, sitting on a washer and dryer at the laundromat, waiting for his clothes to be done while he was a teacher in the 70's, when he was working on his first novel, *Carrie*. Like don't tell me that was easy, because it wasn't. It was hard and once he got in there though, once he started publishing novels and he got in with a publisher, which was the asset. He put his work in a single place for people to find it, and people started buying the books, and he started earning attention, it became easier and easier for him to do that.

Like that's true, because he was using the resources available to him at the time and just as that was true then, it's true today that if you build an asset, you earn the attention of an audience by plugging your work into the right channels where people will find you and then building some kind of permission relationship with them, I think an email address is still a great way to do that today, but that's a strategy that may not be true 10 years from now, and you stay in touch with that audience, they will pay you. They will give you attention and they will give you money.

So the point is, there is a process that has always worked for writers and it will continue to work because it doesn't require a certain kind of technology or tool. It always works. If you put your work out there, if you create an asset, you plug it into the right channels, and then you ask for people's permission to stay in touch with them so you can let them know about new work, the ways in which writers, artists, and creatives have done this, that's evolved. But they've always kind of followed this process, if they've succeeded, and no I don't think that Stephen King was thinking about this as sort of a step-by-step process, but that doesn't mean that there wasn't some kind of hidden order there.

So that's what I maintain. It's not too late, you still have this problem that you've got work that nobody cares about and so you've got to earn the attention of an audience. There is a proven process that you can follow, four-step process that I teach in the book, and if you do that, if you do that work, you will see results. Now results may vary and somebody may be able to do it in six weeks, and somebody else it takes six months. But the point is, this stuff has always worked. And so if you take these sort of proven principles and you apply them into the tools and technology that you have available to you today, you will succeed.

What does success look like for you? I don't know. But I know that this stuff works because I've seen it work again, and again, and again. And for me it's not like, "Well, I tried this once and it didn't work and so I'm going to give up." The general idea here is if you do enough of the right things, you're going to see a result. I like to think of it as sowing and reaping. If I plant one seed and water it and just like wait for it to grow, I might be disappointed with the results of that experiment because it might not grow. Some seeds die in the ground and they don't grow. But if I plan enough seeds and I water and the sun comes out, as the sun usually does over enough days, something's going to grow. And that's how I think about this stuff.

[00:15:05] AT: And some will work and some won't.

[00:15:06] JG: Yeah.

[00:15:07] AT: Have you been the Starbucks on Royal? Is it South Royal Oaks? Do you know which one I'm talking about?

[00:15:12] JG: I don't go to Starbucks.

[00:15:13] AT: All right, so I do. Sorry, I'm the corporate jerk or whatever. But they have a coffee plant there.

[00:15:19] JG: Oh that's cool.

[00:15:19] AT: And I was just thinking, you said, but they have like one and it's sitting like right where - they're like, "Yes, this is a real coffee plant. Please don't touch it." And I'm just thinking, this analogy came to my mind because you said if you plant one see, I don't know how many seeds they had to plant for that one coffee plant? I'm assuming one. And I was thinking like, "If your whole business was that one coffee plant, yeah, you're in trouble." Right? But Starbucks is like, "Well there's a lot of coffee plants to go into Starbucks being Starbucks." And that's the other part of this, is that it's not too late if you do the work, right? And it's not too late if you do the work, right?

[00:15:52] JG: Yeah, exactly. And exactly what the work looks like, the application of the principles, it changes. And that's why I don't love talking about different tools and technology, and it's fine, I don't mind talking about what I'm doing. But I'd much rather prefer to talk about the techniques behind the tools, the principles behind the strategies. Because those things never change, and if you can understand the actual principles involved...

[00:16:23] AT: Yeah, those matter.

[00:16:23] JG: You can always adapt to whatever's going on, whatever fads are happening. I mean I think it's like you read *The Art of War*, right? This 2,000 year old document. I can't remember how old it is. It's old and it's by Sun Tzu and it's about, this is showing my ignorance, but it's about Samurai armies fighting other Samurai armies and how do you win? They're just basic principles and things that have worked for centuries. Every major general, every smart tactician who has gone to war has read that book. It's a very like, they've read that book and though the technologies of what kind of artillery...

[00:17:07] AT: Yeah guys, let's all put the guns down and get swords because I read this book and it talked about swords.

[00:17:12] JG: Yeah, exactly. So they're gleaning the principles from very, very old techniques and applying them to whatever technology's available to them today. I believe the same thing is true for writers and really creatives of all types, but especially for writers. Writing is a very, very old technology. It's one of the oldest technologies and it's gotten, in terms of the publishing, it's really gotten disrupted in the past decade or so because for 500 years, you wrote stuff and you typeset it and they bound it in books and they put those in stores. That is kind of how you got your words read for 500 years and in the past decade or so that's completely changed.

But, there's a lot that hasn't changed. People still read, they still don't have enough time to read all the things that they want to read. They still listen to their friend saying, "Oh, I'm reading this." Or, "Have you heard about this?" Or whatever.

[00:18:05] AT: Absolutely.

[00:18:05] JG: There's a lot of principles that have not changed that are centuries old that still work today, and that's why I believe it's not too late. And as you mentioned, there are advantages we have over Stephen King or J.K. Rowling.

[00:18:20] AT: Oh, absolutely.

[00:18:21] JG: Or whoever. And there are things that have changed that we need to be mindful of and evolve with the times as well. But no, I don't think it's too late to succeed as a writer today.

[00:18:33] AT: So, *It's Not Too Late*, which is the book you can get. Go to goinswriter.com/noisy-world and you can find it there. Jeff, thank you for your time today.

[00:18:43] JG: Thank you.

[END OF EPISODE]

[00:18:51] AT: I encourage you to go, right now, to get *It's Not Too Late*. You can find it at tribewriters.com/ebook. That's tribewriters.com/ebook. Why? Because whether you've already started your writing career or not, this book will help you. Listen, we would love to know what you think of the book and if you've struggled with that question, "Is it too late?" So go to today's episode at goinswriter.com/125, or you can send a message to Jeff on Twitter, @jeffgoins.

And maybe this is an episode that fits a friend, that would help or encourage someone else you know of, a fellow creative that struggles with that question, "Is it too late for me?" We appreciate the time you take to listen to our show. I'm Andy Traub, and on behalf of Jeff Goins, thank you for spending some time with us today. Now go build your portfolio.

"JG: I think once we've seen somebody succeed at it, maybe even, we feel like, "Oh, that person mastered it." You know, we think, "Oh, it's too late for me." To be honest, when I got into this about five years ago, like really seriously started blogging and going all in on it, I felt that way. I felt like it was too late for me.

AT: Yeah it was, it was."

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