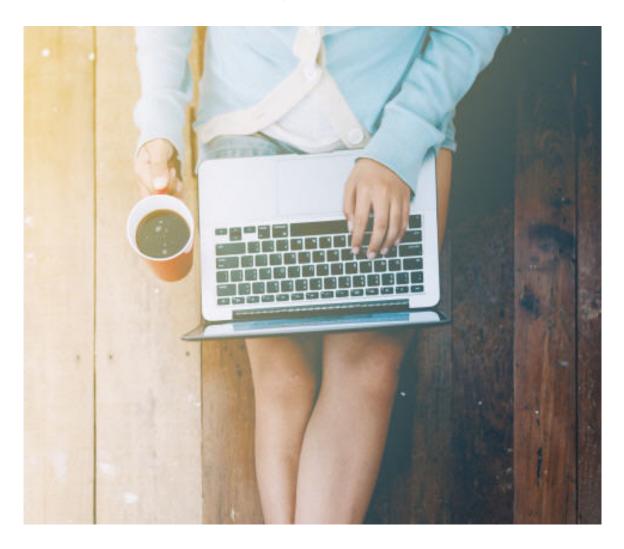
Blogging frees your mind and Empowers You!



Buried deep in the recesses of your mind are the thoughts and feelings that stay hidden until you shine a light on them.

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Blogging Frees Your Mind and Empowers You

Chapter 1: The Healing Power of Blog Journals

Buried deep in the recesses of your mind are the thoughts and feelings that stay hidden until you shine a light on them. They affect you on a day to day basis, but you live your life unaware of the significant impact they have on your personal satisfaction.

These ideas are born from a period of experiences – both good and bad – where your outlook on life, on yourself and on your future were shaped. The sad thing is, most individuals never do shine a light on these thoughts and emotions, which dooms them to an unfulfilled existence – or at the very least, less than what they're capable of achieving.

For those who do make the journey to self discovery, it's a beautiful uncovering of their full potential. How does a man or woman go about achieving this sense of change? It's different for everyone.

Some people do it alone. Others do it with the help of someone who can offer guidance. Some seek insight in person with counseling or in their mind in private meditation sessions.

But there's another method you can use to tap into your feelings and beliefs and see how you can tweak them, eliminate them or grow them into something that can deliver personal satisfaction for you.

It's called blogging, and it's a very simple technical endeavor you can adopt on a daily or weekly basis to help you download what's in your head onto a platform where you can organize and analyze it for better use.

The fact that you're an emotional being is nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, it shows that you're highly tuned in to your surroundings and events. If

you had no emotional reaction, you'd have bigger problems – scarier issues to contend with.

But emotions can also run rampant in your mind, and those feelings and thoughts can take control if you don't take time to process them rationally. That's how a blog can help – by offering you the opportunity to go through the healing process in a convenient manner that lets you seek the help of others, too, if you want it.

Blogging is a short procedure that only requires a few minutes of your time. Yet its yield is powerful when you begin doing it consistently and looking back on the data you provide about your reactions to what transpired each day.

Your blog should have the sole purpose of helping with your mental health. Side benefits are that it can help others, it can ignite change and it can build a community of like-minded people for a global support group.

When you blog for healing purposes, where you're trying to learn how to better deal with what life has thrown your way, make sure you don't stifle yourself. You want to convey all of your frustrations and the most difficult of emotions – such as jealousy, pettiness, and even rage.

Instead of simply reporting what happened, go into depth on how it made you feel, what reaction you had, and whether or not there was a better way to handle things. Be honest about the truth of the situation – whether you overreacted or even didn't react as much as you should have.

A healing blog isn't just about what's wrong with the world and discussing how to fix it. It's also about highlighting the beautiful parts of your life so that you don't lose hope and live a life of despair.

If you've suffered in the past, use your blog to explore the feelings you have about what you went through. You'll be trying to make sense of it all, and sometimes there are no answers to be found.

But by blogging about your thoughts, you can gain some sense of empowerment that helps you understand you're not alone, you're not at fault, and you're a survivor who is now in control of your future.

Use your blog to identify your strengths as well as your weaknesses. Fortify what you do right in life and take the opportunity to understand what you need help working on – and then report on those action steps you took to make the change.

If you're looking to make change from within, and you worry about your faults, then make a concerted effort to take time to look at every situation from a different angle – from a new point of view that you wouldn't have considered previously.

If you have a blog audience, lean on them to help you see how to take things in a new direction. Ask for advice and feedback as you share your story and don't be afraid to open up and receive insight from others.

Blogging might have the ability to change your attitude about things, to heal you from the inside-out and offer a salve to the many emotional wounds that have hurt you in the past.

But in order for it to work, you have to make the commitment to be dedicated to fully exploring your internal thoughts and beliefs, even if it brings emotions to the surface that you typically allow to stay hidden because it's difficult processing them.

The only way you can make things better is if you face them head on and gain an understanding for how you can take back your power and begin handling things from a healthier perspective.

Chapter 2: Blogs Provide You with Public Support

When you're using a blog for self help and personal development, it's important that you not narrow yourself to your sole point of view. The goal is to grow as a person, and that requires a different perspective from your own.

Sometimes, that can be achieved through analysis and reflection on your actions, behaviors and thoughts. But other times, you may get stuck, and having outside input is vital to your quest for change.

To get that kind of support, you need two things – traffic to your blog from relevant readers and engagement from them. We'll talk about how to find your audience (or get found by them) later.

For now, let's talk about what makes people want to add their \$0.02 once they land on your blog, read about your journey, and realize they have something to say that may aid you.

Many bloggers don't understand how to get engagement and it's not as hard as it may seem. You just need to be informed about it. You don't want a horde of lurkers on your blog.

That's not a bad thing, but for an evolution of mind and soul, it's not beneficial to you. There will always be some people who only read and never comment and that may be because they're shy or just not comfortable discussing certain things online.

Once you do get the ball rolling with engagements on your posts, you'll start to see a community of sorts developing. The people commenting will get to know each other and recognize each other's names and points of view.

That's when your blog becomes a safe haven for like-minded individuals all there to share and lift each other up. And of course, if there's ever a

bad seed, you have the power as administrator of your blog to delete their comments and ban them.

Make Sure They're Technically Able to Support You

This may sound obvious, but if you're new to blogging, you may not grasp the technicalities of it all. When you set up your WordPress platform, you'll have settings that you can choose from that determine how your readers can engage.

It's under the Settings and Discussion tab, and that's where you can choose to allow people to comment on new posts. You can make them fill out a first name and email and even register on your blog if you want them to.

And you may want to set it up so that before anyone's comment is approved, it gets emailed to you first so you can give it a thumbs up. This may be especially helpful on a blog with the slant of self help.

You also want your contact form set up correctly. That's a plugin you'll add called Contact Form 7, which allows people to reach out to you privately and directly through email.

Have You Asked for Engagement?

Once you know everything is in working order, you can address the other issues. Sometimes, it's as simple as asking for engagement from your readers. People don't often automatically know you want their input.

They're there to read and get informed and unless you specifically ask for them to get involved, they may not. So what kinds of engagement on your blog can you ask for that will help you?

Some bloggers simply ask people to "Like and Share" their blog post. When you set up a blog, there's an option to install a plugin for social

media buttons. These are the things like a "Facebook thumbs up" that lets people know you read something you enjoyed.

When they click the button, such as Facebook, Pinterest, or Twitter, for example, a box will open up that shares your content to those platforms and allows them to also say something to their audience about what they just read.

This helps your blog get even more engagement and views. So when and how do you do it? First of all, you can simply ask for it. Say something at the end like, "If you enjoyed this post, be sure to click the button and share it on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest!"

You also want to make sure the buttons are easy to see as reminders. Some bloggers fail to do this, only putting their share buttons at the top of the blog post. But if it's a long post, and the reader has scrolled down to read it in its entirety, then they won't be seeing the buttons when they finish reading.

So you can choose to have the buttons at the top, at the bottom – and even floating beside the reader as they scroll, in case they decide they want to share it in the middle of their reading session.

This may happen whenever someone realizes they don't have time to finish the article but they want to read it later, so they'll share it to their social media account so they can easily find it.

Ask the reader to be sure to comment below when you finish writing a blog post. You can tell them you'd love to get their take on it and see if they have any advice for you. Or, ask a question and tell them they can answer it in the comments section below.

You don't want to just blurt out "Comment below." Be more genuine in your request and say something like, "I'd love to hear what your thoughts are – do you think I'm being overreactive or am I justified in feeling this way?"

People love to include their \$0.02 on things, so engagement will increase and that makes more people tune into your blog because it's a relevant place to be where others are communicating.

Make sure you're also asking for the sign up. If you're building a list of readers using an email autoresponder system, so you can email them whenever you want to, make sure you remind them to sign up on the form below your post or in the sidebar of your blog.

Make sure you don't just use words when you ask for engagement. You can also have graphics created that use arrows showing them where to engage and that are visual reminders that catch their eye.

Create Engagement-Worthy Content

If your content is just so-so, it won't give most readers any reason to offer any kind of engagement – from a simple share to a comment. They'll simply read, shrug and move on to something more interesting.

You want your content to give so much value that the reader can't resist the urge to add their opinions or even just thank you for taking the time to reveal your inner thoughts about something.

Your blog posts don't have to have a certain number of words. Some bloggers get so caught up in word count, they miss the point of the post completely – to provide value to the reader!

Focus on making sure you thoroughly explain your topic at hand. If you're blogging about a fear you have, don't just disclose the fear and end your post. Instead, dig into how it affects you, how life is changed because of it, where it stems from, and what you plan on doing about it.

You want to generate good will for the people visiting your blog and taking the time to read your words. If you merely slap up a reminder to yourself about what you were thinking that day, it does everyone – including yourself and your readers – a big disservice.

Do your research on the issue and discuss the options you've uncovered. Then go into why you will or won't be pursuing each one. Ask if any of your readers have any experience with any of the solutions to get them to engage with you about it.

Consistency is key in building trust with your audience. If you invite them on your journey and then suddenly disappear for months at a time, it won't give them much reason to tune in again in the future.

The best thing about getting your audience to engage with you is that it's going to help even more dedicated followers find you. Google and other search engines sit up and take notice when a blog gets interaction from an audience.

They can gauge the number of likes, shares and comments you get – and they can even tell how long someone stays on your blog post, so all of that factors into their decision on which sites to show to people who go to their search engine and type in a phrase for the type of content they want to find.

Search engines want to serve their audience well, so if they have to choose between a blog like yours that's getting a lot of engagement and interaction versus a stagnant blog nobody cares about, their choice will be easy.

Share Your True Self Online

Don't launch a self help blog to explore your journey and then keep everything sterile in nature. The audience is there to connect with you, so it's best if you can open up and be genuine about your experiences, your feelings and thoughts.

Showcase your personality and don't worry as much about perfect grammar as you do about being authentic in your storytelling endeavors. Blog like you're writing a letter to a friend – because that's what many of

these supportive individuals will become to you over the coming months and years.

If they comment on your post and show care and concern – or even kick your butt as a wake-up call, make sure you acknowledge them and thank them for their input as you analyze their recommendation.

If you're struggling and you can't find the kind of success you'd hoped to share, don't use that as an excuse to give up and disappear on them. Be honest. Talk about how you're facing an obstacle that you can't seem to get past.

It's in your darkest times that a self help blog can benefit you because it not only awakens the spirit in you to overcome what you're dealing with, but it inspires your readers to be there for you and support you on your journey.

Chapter 3: Your Blog Is Your Platform for Igniting Change

Part of what makes a journey of personal discovery and growth so wonderful is when you can tap into something that really affects your life and expand awareness about it – not only helping change your own life, but others affected by the issue as well.

While you're working on yourself, you're bound to come across memories or events that shaped who you are and how you think about things. It can damage you permanently if you never work on healing yourself.

Part of that healing process might be to speak openly about the issue and help bring others to the table so that it's not a topic hidden in the shadows anymore – but instead one that a majority of people are now working to understand and prevent from happening again.

Find a Cause That Resonates with You

Change can come within, which of course is what you want to achieve. But while you're altering your worldview, you may also want to work on helping others achieve some personal growth, too.

You may have an issue you blog about that is deeply personal to you – one where you instantly know you'd like to support a cause for it as you work on your own struggles or come to terms with events of your past.

You want the topic to be relevant to your own journey. Don't pick something that has nothing to do with the topics you discuss on your blog. They need to tie in to one another in some way, shape or form.

At the same time, it should be something you're truly passionate about. While a blog is a foundation primarily for text, your audience will be able to feel your emotions from the way you speak about things.

For example, if a lot of your blog focuses on a domestic abuse topic – either you endured it from a spouse or witnessed it as a child – then it would make sense that one of your causes was to support the awareness of domestic abuse.

But if your blog was mostly about your journey working through that topic, and you suddenly began mentioning your cause of trying to get people to use BPA-free plastic, it might feel out of place and jarring for readers.

Where do you find a cause to speak about on your platform? Sometimes, you can find one that exists, but other times, you create your own awareness if nothing is already out there on the topic.

This may end up growing into something significant, and your blog could be the bastion of support for others who have suffered from the problem or issue. But if you want to find other causes to support as you blog, you can look online.

You're looking for other people who think like you do – who also want to make a change or bring about awareness. They tend to gather online in groups on Facebook and other social media platforms and on websites.

Look for organizations or charities that align with your beliefs that you blog about. Whenever you bog about your own experiences, you'll have the opportunity to link to the organization where people can get involved, raise awareness or donate time or money to them.

Make sure it's one you trust – one that is reputable. Do some investigative work to see how the operation is run. You want to choose one where a substantial amount of the donations go toward furthering the cause, and not simply to administrative costs.

You might also want to make sure that whatever cause you focus on has a local chapter that you can get involved with. When you're blogging to empower and heal yourself, it helps to get outside of your own bubble and contribute in some way to the overall good of society – especially if it's something near and dear to your heart.

Learn and Share as Much as You Can About the Cause

Once you select a cause and one or more charities or organizations that you can lend a hand to with your voice on your blog, you'll want to dig in and discover all you can about how it works.

Start with the cause itself. To help yourself and others, it's a good idea to arm yourself with the facts. If it's domestic abuse, for example, then you want to study statistics about how many women, children and even men or pets are abused by the violent acts of someone in the house.

Do you want to focus on a certain kind of abuse that you feel doesn't get as much attention? It might be female on male abuse or elder abuse. Whatever resonates with you is what you want to study more about.

Having statistics and facts not only helps you see that you aren't alone (and your audience, too), but it also helps you discover the root of the problem so that you can somehow work on finding a solution to it.

Because that's what you're after, in the end – a way to put an end to the problem and help others in the process. This will be a very healing process for you if you're able to save others from whatever it is you want through.

Aside from facts, make sure you read about other peoples' stories. This will help you with your own journey of personal growth because you can see how others overcame certain situations that were similar to yours. You can discuss these stories on your own blog.

One great way to initiate a blog post about someone else's story is to provide a summary about it and a link to the full article that you read. Then, discuss your thoughts and feelings about the other person's method of handling the situation.

Did it resonate with you? Could you not relate to how they reacted to a situation that was almost identical to your own? Explore those feelings and opinions and share them with your audience and invite them to provide feedback for how they feel about it as well.

To find the stories, you can look for news articles about them online using search engines. You can also read other people's blogs. And you can invest in books by authors who tell their story in print or digital reads.

You also want to check and see if there is a magazine related to your cause of choice. For example, if you're all about green living, you can probably find a magazine devoted to that topic.

Inside the pages of each issue, there will probably be a personalized account by a contributor who shares his or her story. Another thing you can do with your blog is to focus on the various slants or angles about your topic and cause.

For example, if part of your stress is related to political topics such as climate change, then you can blog about it in a variety of ways. Most of your blog posts will be based on how you feel about the topic.

However, it's also a good idea to look at it from someone else's perspective. That way, you can look at how both sides may have common ground or fact check and prove the other side wrong.

Don't forget to incorporate any offline work you do for your cause into your online blog stratosphere. If you are involved in an organization or charity, make a record of those events and the moments you volunteer for them and convey it to your readers online.

Many of your readers will not have a local chapter for a cause or charity and they will be living vicariously through you and enjoying the way you are getting out there and making a difference in the world.

This effort also lends proof to the fact that you are a leader for this cause and someone who your readers can trust. You'll have other leading experts and influencers reaching out to you in the future, to expand your reach and support you even more.

Plan a Blog Strategy to Bring Awareness to the Cause

Once you've chosen a cause to blog about that aligns with your own journey of self-discovery and growth, and you've spent time learning all you can about the organizations and topic, you'll want to develop a strategy of your own to raise awareness that helps yourself and your readers.

One thing you can do for your audience is host an event on your blog, social media profiles, and YouTube channel. You can make the event fun or serious, and your loyal readers can have a watch party as you bring awareness about the subject to the public eye.

Some bloggers get together if they have mutual interests in a topic and participate in a blog tour. So this would work well if you could find other bloggers who talked about the same topic as you.

You would each spend a period of time on one another's blogs discussing your background and approach to the issue at hand. A blog tour is wonderful for everyone involved because it gives your audience a variety of perspectives.

It shows that you are a leader within your niche market and that other influencers for the cause respect your opinions. Another way to generate support for your issues and expand your readership it to hold some sort of contest for your cause.

It doesn't have to be something extravagant like a new car. You can do a contest where the prize is more about bragging rights, with the entry fee (if you have one) is going to the charity of your choice.

For example, you may have a contest where your blog readers submit a short story or essay about the topic. Or, maybe they submit a photograph that represents something about your cause.

You can have your subscribers and blog readers vote on which one they feel should win. This type of event will help your blog get more recognition and readership because the participants will be sharing their entries in hopes of winning.

You don't want to do this too often because then it's not special, but hosting a periodic contest is exciting for your blog readers. One thing you can do during your journey of self discovery and personal growth is interview others who have experienced some of the same problems as you.

This can be experts on that topic or fellow bloggers. It can even be a reader of your own blog who reached out and contacted you. Interviewing another person about an issue that affects your life and those

of your readers is a great way to share things from a different perspective and let people know that they are not alone.

You can conduct an interview for your blog in a variety of ways. Many bloggers simply email a list of questions to the person being interviewed, who then answers the questions and returns them to you for publication on your blog.

If you do interview someone for your blog, always remember to link back to their own website in appreciation for them taking the time to share their story with your readers. Interviewing others will usually expand your own blog audience because the person being interviewed will share the link to the interview with their own readers.

It positions them as an expert to their audience, so it benefits both of you. Another way you can interview someone is by recording the screen as the two of you have a face-to-face conversation on a tool such as Skype.

Or, you can create an audio recording of a conversation as well. Another thing that will be fun for your readers and healing for you is to challenge everyone in some fashion to help raise awareness and do something positive for your cause.

You can design a challenge that pushes everyone to get outside of their comfort zone and do something amazing. For example, you might give everyone a one week challenge to raise money for a cause or charity that means a lot to you based on your self-help journey.

Or, you can challenge everyone to schedule a volunteer opportunity where they can donate time to a particular organization that helps with that topic. Be sure to take time on your blog to celebrate everyone who participates and how they contributed to the cause.

You can share their actions with your audience and help the community on your blog bond over their mutual efforts. Whenever you're blogging

about causes that bring you happiness or personal satisfaction, you want to give your readers a call to action.

Don't just tell them about a cause or charity, but instruct them on how they can help. Share things like other websites, phone numbers, and organizations that they may want to get involved with.

Give them specific details on how they can get involved for themselves or to help others. Then, urge them to contact you and let you know how it turned out. Another thing you can do when blogging about a particular cause that resonates with you is to link to any important petitions that help initiate change in the world.

For example, if you are a lover of animals and their rights, then you might link to a petition that helps support animals in some way. Ask your readers to sign the petition. But also go one step further.

Ask them to share the petition with their own friends and family members so that you can help raise more awareness and get more action takers onboard. One thing that we'll talk about later is the fact that you can use keywords to help your blog participate in certain causes.

Online, keywords are often known as hashtags in social media circles. So instruct your audience, if they share your blog post about a certain cars, to use specific hashtag keywords in their posts.

Chapter 4: Setting Up Your Blog for Public Viewing

You can have the best intentions with your blog - to not only benefit yourself you're your personal journey, but to help others as well. However, if your blog is not capable of being found by others, it will serve no one's best interests.

It also has to meet the criteria of working in terms of navigation and technicalities. Otherwise, your audience will have a very frustrating experience and a negative opinion of your blog.

It's important that you take your time on this step because you should only have to do it once. Aside from optimizing your blog for search engines to be found by your audience, the other steps are one time actions.

The last thing you want to do is start on a blog, only to find months later, or even years, that you set it up wrong and need to start over. You can prevent a mistake like this simply by taking your time and carefully implementing the tasks in the beginning.

Getting the Right Domain

There are multiple free blogging platforms that you can use. Many newcomers to the blogging process often choose a free blog platform, but this is a big mistake. You want to own your digital real estate so that you are in complete control.

To own your blog, you will need to register a domain name. It's always preferable if you buy a .com domain because that is what most people automatically type in when they are going to a website.

The domain registrar will probably suggest that you get all of the variations such as .net, .info and so on, but these are not necessary. You can go to a site like GoDaddy.com to register your domain.

There, you will be able to type in the domain name that you desire and see if it is available. If it is, then you can purchase it and register it in your name. Registration will last for a year or more, depending on what you choose.

At the end of every year, you will have the opportunity to renew your registration. Make sure that you don't forget to renew your domain name, or else you will lose your blog and all of the hard work you've done on it.

If you want to save money, you can search for a coupon code to purchase your domain for only \$0.99. If you do have to pay full price, it's a one time fee of around \$12. So what type of domain name should you try to register?

Some people who are blogging about their personal journey register their name as the domain. For example, if your name was John Doe, you would try to register JohnDoe.com.

If it was unavailable, you could try to insert your middle name or middle initial. Some people don't want to use their name as their blog home. Instead, they want something that represents their journey.

But you want to make sure people understand what your blog is about when they see the domain name. For example, if you struggled with weight loss, you might think of choosing a domain such as "butterflygoals.com" because to you, it represents the change that you are going through in terms of a metamorphosis from being overweight to becoming fit.

But the only problem with this is, to the average person seeing that domain name, it represents an actual butterfly and the reader isn't sure what the goals are all about. You want to be strategic when registering your domain name.

One of the best things you can do is think in terms of keywords and phrases that represent your journey. You may be working on multiple things when it comes to self development, so your domain may not be a narrow topic such as, weightlossjourney.com.

Instead, you may want it to encompass your entire personal growth evolution. If you plan on helping yourself and others with many self-help topics, then you may want to get a domain that represents that, such as selfhelptips.com or improving mylife.com.

You can even create a combination of slants such as choosing a domain that combines your name with the self-help angle. For example, you might register JohnsSelfHelpJourney.com.

If you represent a certain demographic, such as senior citizens, then you may want to choose a domain that pairs that information with your topic. For example, you might choose to register a domain like SeniorSelfHelp.com.

When you register a domain, you have the option of making it private. If you do not choose to make the blog private, then technologically savvy individuals may be able to look up the ownership of the domain and see your name and registration address.

So make sure you choose private if that is a concern for you. When you register a domain, many companies will try to upsell you on everything from website creation to email accounts.

You do not need to buy email addresses when you register a domain. You will be able to create one yourself within your dashboard called a cpanel. So don't add anything on but the domain itself when you check out, unless it's the privacy option, which is your preference.

Finding an Affordable Hosting Account

Once you register your domain name, it will be time for you to bring it to life with a hosting account. Hosting is where all of your files will be saved so that your blog is visible to an online audience.

There are many different hosting companies you can choose from. One of the more popular hosting accounts for newcomers is Hostgator.com. Here, you can get a hosting account for your blog for under \$10 per month. When you sign up for a new hosting account, you will then go back to your domain registrar and point the servers to your new hosting company. If you're confused about how to do this, don't worry.

It's a very easy process and there should be instructions for you to follow for whatever company you signed up with. Pointing the servers should take no more than a few seconds, and the company will process it for you in anywhere from 10 minutes to 24 hours.

You want to choose a hosting company that has 24 hour support. Whether you need to call the hosting company or chat with them online, their support team should always be there to serve you if you have any questions or difficulties managing your account.

Just as the domain registrar will try to persuade you to upgrade the sale, a hosting company may try to convince you that you need a larger hosting account. If you only have one blog, go with the smallest plan available.

Later down the road, if you want to branch out or need more space, you can always upgrade your options. Sometimes things like domain add-ons and hosting options will default and you'll need to uncheck them before you check out with your cart.

Installing WordPress as Your Blog Platform

The next step you need to do is to install WordPress on your domain. WordPress is a blogging platform that is very easy for newbies to use. The installation takes under one minute and is very simple to do.

Inside your hosting account where are your cpanel is, you'll find a Quick Install option. Click on it and register for a WordPress account. When it begins to install the platform on your domain, it will ask you for a few simple settings.

For example, the first thing you'll want to know is where you want it to install WordPress. The best option for this is to leave it on the default so that it installs on yourdomain.com.

Some people choose to put it on yourdomain.com/blog but that's not necessary for your blog needs. The system will also want to know how you want to be named as the administrator.

You can enter your name and contact information at this time. Once you have selected this information, you'll click the install button again and the system will take over from there.

Within seconds, you'll be given your new login information as well as the URL that you will visit to sign into your new blog. Make sure you write this information down and keep it somewhere safe so that you can always remember how to get into your blog in the future.

If you run into any installation errors, simply contact your hosting account's customer service team and they can help you fix the problem. They may need to delete the files and have you start over, but it should still only take a few seconds to a minute to conduct a new installation.

Configuring Your Blog Settings

When you log into your dashboard, you'll need to set up several things right off the bat. First, choose a theme for your blog. You can choose free or paid themes, so if you're just getting started, go with a free option that has a look you like.

After you do that, install a few plugins for your blog. You want people to be able to contact you, so install the Contact Form 7 plugin and create a page they can use to reach out to you.

You may want to install the Akismet anti spam plugin to keep spammers from burdening your blog with useless comments. This will help clean up your blog on autopilot, meaning less work for you.

You'll also want to choose a social buttons plugin. There are many different ones to choose from. You'll be able to configure which buttons it showcases, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Next, go to the Settings tab and start with General settings to give your blog a title and choose the basics, such as time zone, language and other details. After that, click on the Reading setting and make sure the option for Search Engine Visibility is unchecked.

If it's checked, that means it's discouraging search engines from finding your blog, and you don't want that because it will limit your audience and make it more difficult for people to find your blog.

On the Discussions setting tab, make sure you have it set up so that you're allowing people to post a comment, but have them email you for approval. This type of moderation is perfect for you to stay on top of the engagement within your blog community and ensure you respond to each person who takes the time to communicate with you.

Under the Permalinks settings tab, it's often best to choose Post Name as the structure for your blog post URLs. This allows your keyword titles to show up, which helps with search engine optimization.

Optimizing Your Blog for Search Engines

When it comes to running a blog, your goal is often to get found by others so that they can support you and you can support them in return. To do this, you need to make sure your blog is capable of being indexed and discovered by the right audience.

Whenever people use search engines like Google or Bing, they type in a keyword or phrase. If they want to find help with weight loss, they might look up weight loss tips, for example.

So you'll not only want your domain to have certain keywords in the URL, but you'll want to use those phrases in the title of your blog post, within the text of the blog entry itself, and as words whenever you enter the tags and category for the post to be designated with.

You can use phrases that have a broad appeal, like "weight loss" and more narrow phrases that might have less competition to rank for, which are known as long tail keyword phrases.

That might be something like, "weight loss tips for new mothers," for example. It will be easier for you to get found for those and although the number of people searching might be less, it's also more targeted to who you want to reach.

You can use free or paid keyword tools to download a list of keywords and phrases people are using to search for the topics you discuss on your blog. There are other optimization tips you can begin using, but start with keywords.

From there, you can discover things like on page optimization where you make sure navigation and social sharing is optimal, your content is high quality and unique, and the page is inviting to spiders, which are the bots that come from the search engine to crawl and index your blog for relevancy.

Chapter 5: Generating Ideas for Blog Journal Topics

When you have a blog, there will be times when you feel a sense of clarity escape you – when life is already overwhelming and you're not sure how to formulate your words or what to say to your audience.

You want to have some writing strategies in your back pocket so that you make the blogging process effortless. There are many methods for

journaling on your digital blog that will help you in your journey of personal development and empowerment.

Daily Events and Analysis

The most straightforward and simplistic of the strategies is to simply have an accounting of what happened to you over the course of a day. You'll be exploring a wide variety of things that affected you, how you handled the situations and what you'll do in the future.

For example, you might sit down to your blog at the end of the evening and share the pros and cons of your day. Make sure it's not all negative. You can talk about your frustrations with work, how your personal and professional relationships went that day, and talk about other issues, too.

Maybe you'll touch on any health concerns you have or political or worldview issues that are raising alarm for you. Make sure you're setting goals to better yourself and describing how your efforts went that day.

What things could you work better on and what are you excelling at right now? Every day might be different, or you may have a stretch where everything seems identical, which means you need to push harder to get out of your comfort zone.

Be sure to look for patterns and analyze how your days and weeks are unfolding. If you're feeling blah every day, just going through the motions, then describe how you can shake things up and improve them.

Successes and Setbacks

Every day will be full of small wins or defeats. You can discuss these at length on your personal development blog. So let's say your blog talks about a specific problem you have in life.

It could be your marriage. Maybe you felt that today, the two of you talked more and shared a laugh about a memory. Or maybe you enjoyed feeling doted on when your spouse made you dinner.

It's good to be able to look back at these efforts and see how they impact your life. If you suffer a setback, talk about that, too. Maybe you two went the entire day without saying more than "hi" and "bye" to each other.

Delve in to how that made you feel but then go further and discuss how you can avoid that in the future. Maybe make a list of ideas on how you can generate more discussions each day. Print it out and implement it over the week and then analyze it again.

Goals and Tasks Lists

One thing your digital blog journal will be perfect for is keeping you on track with your goals. These goals should be specific and should be broken down into multiple, smaller milestones.

This helps you see if you're making progress with whatever it is you want to work on. Make sure you're addressing the goal consistently on your blog. Don't give up and disappear on it.

If you suffer a setback with it, talk about it, face the obstacle and move forward. Whenever you set a goal with milestones, make a strategic plan to implement it with your task list spelled out.

For example, if you're going to work on strengthening your marriage, be blunt about what needs to be improved. Is it communication? Respect? Help around the house? Romance?

Break down the issues and talk about the best solutions for each one. Try a variety of things. If simply talking more didn't have an effect, then maybe it was the subject matter or an issue of talking rather than listening and asking questions.

Affirmations and Optimism

One way to fill up your blog journal is to immerse yourself in a series of affirmations and optimism. Many people turn a journal into a venting station, harping on the negative issues in their lives.

But this only keeps you chained to the problems and you want to set yourself free and experience the joys life has to offer. So start with a positive mindset. Every time you rage about the negative, balance it with some optimism.

You don't want to squash the truth of the situation, but after venting, you want to move forward with some hope and promise. Look up some topics of interest to you that have affirmations.

Positive affirmations reinforce the fact that you are in control of your destiny and how your day unfolds. So instead of just saying, "I'll try to eat better today," your positive affirmation would say, "I feed my body wholesome, nutritious meals that give me energy."

Quotes and Questions

Sometimes it's good to spark your creativity with your blog journal using some quotes or questions that can get you thinking about things and conveying your thoughts to your audience.

Start with quotes. Find things that motivate or enlighten you. For example, a quote about marriage troubles might be, "It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages."

Read and share the quote, and discuss how that pertains to your own marriage. Have you realized that you lost the friendship you once had? What can you do about it? Discuss some ideas and then as you implement them, share it with your audience.

You might plan a date that revisits one you had years ago with your spouse where you both laughed and had so much fun. Share the planning process and talk about how it went after the fact. Did it work – or not, and if not, what happens next?

You might find a prompt for a question that asks, "Why do you want to work things out with me?" Focus on that within your blog. It's not enough to say you'll work on a marriage.

What's at the root of why you want things to work? You might even talk to your spouse and then report back on your blog about how things went. Of course, always respect the other person's privacy in these matters.

Memories and Motivation

One thing you can focus on within your blog are memories and motivation for change. Let's say you harbor a great deal of resentment for parental abuse you endured. You can get that out in the open and discuss how it impacted the rest of your life.

Did you have trust issues with significant others? Or did you attract an abusive spouse and repeat the process? Turn the memories into motivation for change. You want to bury the past and move on to a healthy future.

Don't ignore the fact that the reverse can be true, too. Sometimes you have very happy memories and you want to use them to motivate yourself to make positive changes. For example, maybe you used to garden with your dad and you loved the connection you felt so you want to begin gardening to connect with your own child.

Stress Relief and Self-Care

One thing most people ignore to their detriment is focusing on stress relief and self care. The two go hand in hand and it's important, as you work on your personal development, that you pamper and nurture yourself through the process.

First, implement and share your system for stress relief. Are you meditating before you blog or at some point in the day? Do you indulge in a relaxing and soothing spa bath at the end of each day?

Use your blog to describe it – share the process of setting a relaxing atmosphere and what products you use to unwind, such as lavender bath bombs or scented candles. Your advice and tips can help your readers take the idea and run with it, too.

After you work on sharing your stress relief options, dive into self care routines. Self care is more about the maintenance of yourself. You might give yourself plenty of rest, good nutrition, a healthy skincare routine, and so on.

Talking about these issues not only helps your audience, but it reminds you to be consistent with them, too. That way, if you would have neglected them, you'll be prompted to initiate a stress alleviating and self care routine just so you can discuss it with your audience.

Prompts and Persuasions

Writing prompts are a fabulous tool for bloggers, regardless of what your blog is about. There are ideas online or books full of writing prompts. Sometimes, a writing prompt will take you in a revealing direction.

Go to your favorite search engine of choice and type in the phrase blog writing prompts. There, you'll find hundreds of pages with ideas you can choose from. For example, maybe you choose the prompt: Write an open letter to your future self.

During this exercise, you begin thinking of everything you want to unfold. You talk about how scared you were (during the present time) or what obstacles you were dreading having to get past.

Motivate yourself and talk about how hard it was, but you made it through. This gives you inspiration to push forward because you can envision the future you want. Talk about your hopes, such as, "I hope you managed to get out of this abusive situation because it's going to end badly," or, "I hope you discovered a weight loss method that worked for you because I'm miserable right now."

Visualizing your future or using any writing prompt to think about things in a new light can be the source of transformation for you on this journey, and your audience will enjoy watching it all unfold.

Chapter 6: Attracting an Audience for Engagement on Your Blog

When you launch your personal development blog, you may be content not having a public audience for awhile. But over time, as one or two individuals trickle in, you begin to realize it's beneficial to have a supportive audience.

These people come to hear your story and offer their own input and guidance that you can take or leave on a regular basis. It's especially helpful when you get stuck on something and can't seem to move forward.

But how can you attract an audience for your blog? We've already touched on the search engine optimization process. This is one techbased solution that works well for you organically.

But there are other methods you can pursue, too. Some are free and some are paid, so depending on your purpose for your blog, you may want to watch your budget or invest in obtaining readership for your site.

Socializing Your Site on Facebook

Facebook has a large, engaged audience and you can tap into that subscriber base without ever paying a penny to do it. Once your blog is in place, you can start both a page and a profile on the Facebook platform.

Using a page, you're setting up the branding for your personal development blog and you'll be the only one who is sharing insight with your interested followers. You can publish snippets of your blog posts and link to them from your page.

When you launch a group, it becomes more of a community for like-minded individuals. You might start a group for one of the problems you're working on – or for self help in general.

Here, others can post to the group and you can still share your blog links to the group to build more traffic and readership for your posts. You can also join groups on Facebook, and many of them allow you to share your links within the group.

Putting Up Awareness on Pinterest

Pinterest is an idea sharing site that many women and men use to save and share concepts and inspiration. They organize them on what's known as Pin boards, saving things like blog posts to them in order to refer to them later.

Your blog can benefit from the traffic by using a combination of a valuable blog post with an image that reflects the ideas shared in the post by you. For example, let's say you feel stuck in life and one of your blog posts is a brainstorming session about that.

You can create a post about the top 10 ways you plan on getting unstuck in life and then create a simple image that uses that title or something like it, such as: "10 Ways to Get Unstuck in Life."

Create the image using a free tool like Canva and then share your post to Pinterest. Make sure you tag it with relevant keyword phrases like, "self help" so that others can find it, and save it to their own Pin boards.

You can even join group boards started by other Pinners and share your pins to their boards. The best way to do this is to share a variety of items, not just your own, so that it's more organic in nature.

Using YouTube to Bring People to Your Site

We'll be going over the use of video and audio in the next chapter, but for now, what you need to know is that you can use these free multimedia sites to generate more traffic to your text-based blog.

There are many free video sharing sites. The top one is probably YouTube. You can sign up for a free account and put your media on there so that it brands your blog for you and sends traffic your way.

The key to this working is for you to share good, valuable information and tips. You want to build a base on the video sites where you have a loyal viewership with plenty of engagement.

Always make sure you brand your blog, both verbally and in writing on the video. You should have your URL written at the beginning and end of the video as well as linked in the description, too.

When people find you on a video sharing site and they enjoy what you have to say, they'll be pleased to see there's somewhere else they can follow you, too – on your blog!

Teaming Up with Twitter to Shine a Light on Your Blog

Twitter is a great place to quickly and easily promote your blog and its message to a large swatch of like-minded individuals. Using keywords called hashtags, you can get your blog found by the right audience.

All you have to do is write your blog post and then go to your Twitter account and share it with a brief message designed to drive traffic to your blog. Whenever people see it, they can share it with their own audience by ReTweeting it for you and helping your post go viral.

Starting a Podcast to Bring in an Audience

Podcasting is becoming more and more popular for people who want to learn and improve their lives as they multitask. Many people are listening to podcasts during their commute, while they work out at the gym, or as they work on projects at home or in the office.

A podcast is free to create on many sites, such as Anchor.FM. When you sign up for an account, they will share your podcast for you on other platforms automatically, helping you expand your listener base.

You can record a simple podcast right from your phone. It doesn't require any special equipment and it's fast and easy to upload from anywhere on the go. To bring traffic to your blog, you'll want to make sure you create a quality series and brand your site.

In your podcast, make sure you advertise the blog URL at the beginning and end of the podcast show - and if possible, link to it in the description of the episode. This helps people quickly find you if they want to see what else you have to offer in terms of insight and inspiration.

Forums

Forums are similar to social networking sites but they're usually hosted on a site owner's domain. For example, you might find a self help site that has a blog and a forum on it for the community.

Many of these forums don't mind if you promote your own site, but they don't want you to blatantly spam the forum with comments promoting your own domain. There's a better way to go about it.

First, join the forum and see if it's active or not. You want to join thriving communities where many people are active on a daily basis. You can find forums for almost any issue you struggle with – your weight, relationships, career and more.

Check out the rules of the forum and make sure you abide by them. Sometimes, you won't have a way to specifically link to your site, but your genuine and helpful advice will make people reach out to you to learn more from you.

Other times, you'll be able to add your link to comments using a signature file that points people in the direction of your blog. This is done by setting it up in your profile. It's usually a single sentence followed by a link to your blog.

Whenever someone posts on the forum, you can add your comment to it, and below your comment, the signature file will automatically show up. So you might have it say something like, "Find more self help tips at www.YourdDomain.com."

The link will be active and clickable, and whenever you contribute thoughtfully to a thread, people will be able to see where they can follow you and read your blog in the future.

Paid Ads

You may not think that paying for traffic is anything you want to embark on. After all, this is a personal development journey. But as you may discover over time, the ability to have abroad reach around the globe as you take care of your own needs and help others is a very powerful influence and you may even eventually turn it into a career.

Even if it's not a career, you may want to get as many eyes on your message as possible if it's important to you. So you can invest is small (or large) sums of money to generate traffic to your blog.

One thing you can do is help your blog get found on Google using Google Ads. This way, whenever someone searches for a keyword phrase, your blog link will be shown at the top of the search results.

This is faster and easier than trying to organically rank your blog for keywords using search engine optimization strategies. But Google and other search engines aren't the only places you can buy positioning.

You can do the same on Facebook. Right in the middle of everyone's feed, you can have a post show up that includes a blurb and a link to your blog. You get the flexibility to choose how much or how little you spend.

You also get to select who you want your ad shown to. You can pick based on demographics such as age, gender, location, and even interests. This helps narrow down the audience so your ad money is well spent.

Instagram has the same type of ad ability. Within someone's Instagram feed, you'll be able to put a sponsored ad that promotes your account. You can have a link in your bio on Instagram and drive traffic to your blog.

And there are also solo ads you purchase from people who have a list of subscribers. You'll create an email with a link to your blog that gets out to someone else's loyal list of readers.

Regardless of what method you choose, you'll be able to log into your cpanel and see what the traffic stats are and find out exactly where people are coming from – search engines, forums, other blog sites, social networks, and so on. Then you can tweak your content and efforts and expand your reach even more!

Chapter 7: Adding Multi Media to Your Blog

The best thing about a blog of your own is that you have a myriad of ways you can get your message out. The most common method is through the written word. Typing your thoughts out like you would in a print journal helps you express your feelings clearly for your audience.

It also helps you quickly look back on memories and events because your blog can be searched for certain keywords that you've used in your content. For example, if you want to find specific information about a traumatic event such as a wreck you in, you could search by the word wreck and find any blog post that you mentioned it in.

You want to organize your thoughts and feelings well before you put them on your blog. Your blog shouldn't be a rambling mess of random thoughts that come spilling out of your head into a public space.

You might want to develop a system of sorts, like a template where you discuss things like:

- What the situation currently is
- How I feel about what's happening
- What I plan to do about it
- What the results of my actions and behavior might be

That way, every time you open a new blog post, you'll have a formula you can adhere to in order to make sure your thoughts are concise and strategic in your effort to observe and analyze them for further action.

Don't worry about the length of your blog posts. What matters most is the message you're conveying to your readers and as a record for yourself to look back on and generate lasting change.

In addition to working on your written content, you'll want to use image media in your blog posts. Images help break up long bouts of monotonous text. It gives the reader a visual representation of the concept, too.

You can use quote posters, create images using tools like Canva or use pictures you take with your own camera to depict what's happening in your life or what you're working on.

These images will also usually show up whenever you share them on social media. So if you post a link to your blog on Facebook or Twitter, it will pull in an image from your blog post and use it as a thumbnail representation.

Video is another fantastic media format you can use in your blogging pursuits. With video, you can choose to be on screen or off. You don't have to show your face if you don't want to.

There are free tools like CamStudio that you can use to screen capture your computer screen and you can record a PowerPoint presentation or slides you create using Canva (a free tool).

If you use video as your media format, make sure that the video is aesthetically pleasing. That means you should not film in front of a cluttered mess. Also make sure the background noise is eliminated or kept to a minimum.

If you don't have a decent background to film in front of, use a blank wall behind you as you speak. There are also backgrounds you can order on sites like Amazon that help you give a polished, professional look.

When you record your video, you don't need to have a script for it. In fact, speaking off the cuff is typically better than being so formal with a script where everyone can tell you're reading.

Where text shouldn't be written for any certain length, keep in mind that people have a short attention span when it comes to watching video.

With text, they're in control of how fast or slow they read and digest the information.

When they're watching a video, they're at the mercy of you – so if you're lost in thought and trying to find the right words or getting off-track, they simply have to sit through it. You can give yourself some quick one-word prompts to remind you of what you were going to say.

Usually, videos should be kept under 10 minutes. Some people use a 3 minute mark, but others go as long as 30. It really depends on how engaging your content is and who your audience is.

You can go out and watch some of your competitors' videos to see what the typical audience for that kind of topic prefers when it comes to length and style in a video. Just remember you don't want to be a total knock off of another video persona.

You want to be yourself and generate your own following and fans, not mimic anyone else's style. When your video is on YouTube, use the Embed option to place it directly inside your blog. You can even do a transcript of it so you have both text and video if you want.

Audio is another form of media that isn't used as often on blogs, but which can be very effective in getting your message out. You can record and embed audio files directly on your blog.

A play button will display in the blog post, and just as with video, you can provide a written transcript if you wish. So what makes a good audio format? There are some tips you can follow to make the most of it.

First, record on quality equipment. You don't want your audience having to listen to anything riddled with static or that makes you sound like you're in a tunnel or far away. You don't have to spend a lot of money, but test your equipment and recording space to make it sound the best it can.

When you record your podcast, not only will the audience not have text, but they won't have any visual stimuli to go off of, so you need to keep the conversation moving. Work off of an outline and have a pen and paper in hand to jot down notes if you want to add to your discussion along the way.

You can have a podcast show that you embed on your blog where you interview other people and having conversations that your listeners can tune into. You can also allow calls to be taken during the live show, and then embed it for future listeners who missed the live option.

Regardless of which media formats you choose to use on your blog, make sure you work on perfecting it so that you're doing two very important things. First, you want to make sure you're delivering the best content and value possible.

Second, your media should be enjoyable and informative for your audience. Whether it's text that needs to be cleaned up, video or audio files that need more finesse, or images that could be better representative of your ideas, always work on learning new tips to improve.

Chapter 8: Generating Profits from Your Blog Journal

There may come a time in your blog journey where things are moving along well and you decide to do this fulltime or even part time, for profit. There are many bloggers who turn their passion for issues and self growth into a platform for earnings.

You can do this from day one or wait until you have a significant following to begin making money off of the insight you share and the motivation you provide to your audience.

Ad Revenue

In the previous chapter, we talked about the possibility of you purchasing ad space to get traffic to your blog. The people hosting those ads are sometimes fellow bloggers who run a site just like you, or something similar.

If you have a domain, you can sign up to run ads and earn money whenever your visitors click on it. You can place banner ads in the sidebar of your blog, under the header and in the post itself.

You can choose what kinds of ads get displayed on your blog so that they stay relevant. Keep in mind there is a drawback to using ads like this on your blog. It's considered link leakage.

That means if someone lands on your blog to get to know you and read your content, but then they see an ad that interests them, they may click away and go elsewhere, so you lose your audience.

Ad revenue like this, once it's set up, is a pretty hands off way of earning money. Every blog post you put up is another opportunity for you to earn money, so the more content you have and the more traffic you get, the more you earn in the long run.

If you're building a list on your blog, where you have people subscribing to your newsletter, then you might be able to sell solo ads to people as well. That means you'll send out an email to your list that they wrote, sending them to the ad buyer's own domain.

There are marketplaces you can find to list your solo ad costs and the topic of your blog so that interested buyers can find you and purchase a solo ad in the upcoming days and weeks. Sometimes, they run multiple ads if it converts well for them.

Affiliate Marketing

You may want to monetize your blogging efforts by promoting things in return for a commission. This is what's known as affiliate commission and it can work flawlessly with a personal development blog.

Commissions range from a small 10% to 50% or more, depending on the product and company you're promoting to your audience. You want to maintain the trust of your audience, so you never want to promote anything you don't believe in.

What kinds of items can you promote? Whatever you feel would truly benefit your readers. It's even better if you've tried it yourself and can recommend it to your audience.

So for example, let's say you struggle with getting enough sleep and it impacts your emotions. You could go to Amazon and look at all of the sleep aid products – from melatonin supplements to high thread sheets and bedding sets.

You could sign up for an account as an Amazon affiliate, known as an Associate, and earn a commission whenever someone buys one of the items you discuss on your blog through your link.

For example, in your blog post, you might write something like, "I haven't been sleeping well lately. It's making me overly emotional and drained. So this week, I started taking a 5 mg melatonin supplement and it's been life changing, helping me sleep through the night without fail."

You could hyperlink the words 5 mg melatonin supplement or say something like, "The one I'm taking is (Product Name) Melatonin 5 mg," and hyperlink the exact product name.

Amazon and other stores like Walmart, Target and others, will track the clicks and give you a portion of the earnings for every sale. And the best part is, if the shopper adds anything else to their cart before checkout, you earn a commission on that, too.

You can also promote as an affiliate and recommend digital information products like eBooks and memberships as well as video courses. You might promote a nutrition or stress relief class on Udemy or a membership about saving relationships and earn your commission that way.

You can start looking for opportunities on sites like Amazon, Share-a-Sale, Commission Junction (for tangible items) as well as ClickBank, JVZoo and Warrior Plus for digital products.

Information Product Development

Maybe you have a good idea for an info product of your own. Once you've been blogging for awhile and gaining expertise in working through things and promoting self development, you can create a course, membership or eBook yourself and list it for sale online.

Not only will you earn on the sale of your info product, but you'll have affiliates signing up to promote your product for you, and you can share around 50% of the revenue with them for bringing you the customer.

Info product development is very easy. You can open up a Word document and write a book. Save it as a PDF file and you have a product! The same marketplaces you used to find products to promote as an affiliate will list your product for sale as a vendor.

Go to ClickBank, JVZoo and Warrior Plus as well as Amazon Kindle and list the book there. Do note that selling an info product on ClickBank might pay more than listing it on Amazon, just because of what consumers are used to spending there.

eCommerce

Depending on your personal flair and style for conveying a message, you might want to open up a shop of your own and use dropshipping and eCom as your tool of choice to earn money with your blog.

Since you own the domain, you can have a tab called Store or Shop on your website that sells things like journals, t-shirts, mugs, calendars and other items consumers often shop for when they believe in something strongly.

With this business model, you don't have to blog and create products. You simply upload your design or the wording for the item and let the fulfillment company create the product and ship it out to your customer for you.

Life Coaching

Not every niche topic will be good for this business model, but life coaches help people get through things. They assist you in designing the kind of life that makes you happy and free.

If you master the skill of personal development and your audience is begging you to coach them, you can do that! You can create packages for them to buy where you coach them via Skype or email.

Not only can you pick one of the above methods to monetize your blog, but you can combine them as well. A blog can become very lucrative if you are strategic about it, and in the process, you'll be helping yourself with personal development as well as assisting others in achieving their self help goals.

Having a blog of your own can be very empowering. It forces you to be truthful and attentive to your needs. It allows you to gather support from a wider audience. And it provides a healthy outlet for you to work through your problems and fortify your strengths over time.



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