

Stop Romanticizing Podcasting: What You Actually Need To Consider Before You Hit Record

The good news is anyone can start a podcast these days. The bad news is anyone can start a podcast these days. With over [4.2M podcasts](#) out there, it's starting to feel like everyone already has. The barrier to entry is low, which is great for access, not so great for quality. It reminds me of the early blogging days. Just hit record, post a few clips, and suddenly you're a thought leader.

But if you want to make something with staying power, it takes a lot more than a mic and a clever name. After three years at it, I've seen what works and what burns out fast. The difference isn't production value. It's your willingness to show up, be seen, and keep going even when no one's clapping.

People make it look easy, but most of the podcasters you admire have been at it for years. They started when no one was listening. They've invested time, money, and creative energy before they ever booked a big guest or sold an ad spot.

If you're not already famous, you don't get to skip the line. It doesn't mean your voice doesn't matter. But it does mean you need a clear point of view, a value exchange with the audience, a plan for distribution, and the stamina to keep showing up, even when no one's clapping...yet.

The 5 Things You Actually Need (And They're Not What You Think)

1. You Have to Want To Do It (No Matter If Anyone Notices)

You have to want to do this and enjoy the act of recording assuming it goes to no one. You cannot consider the end goal during the beginning of or the middle of the process, meaning if you are doing it for the social media likes or the idea that you'll be famous or that it'll be good for your business, you should really reconsider the 'why'.

Ask yourself this uncomfortable question: Would I still record episodes if absolutely no one listened? If the answer is no, save yourself the time and emotional damage. Find a different hobby.

2. The Art of "Clip and Ship" and Experimentation

Your podcast might be the engine, but distribution is the fuel. No clips, no cuts, no images means no growth.

You could record the most profound, soul-shifting conversation (and I have) but if you're not slicing it into shareable content, you're basically shouting into the wind. This is the part people don't talk about enough: you're not just a podcaster. You're a content creator, a video editor, a strategist, and your own social media manager. It's a lot and for most people starting out, it's a one-person show.

You are also acting like a content scientist, experimenting with different forms and formats and platforms: from quote cards to carousels, videos to screen grabs with text, it's all part of the game of throwing it all out there and seeing what sticks. The thing you were sure would go viral might flop. The random side comment? 200k views.

It's trial and error. Test and learn. Repackage and try again. That's the job.

3. Patience for the Long Game

Podcasting is not a sprint or a marathon. It's more like deciding to walk across the country with no guaranteed destination. Most people expect results in weeks. You'll be lucky to see meaningful growth in your first year.

You'll want to quit. Probably around episode 15 when you realize you've been talking to yourself for three months. But the people who make it aren't necessarily the most talented, they're the ones who kept recording when quitting felt like the logical choice.

4. Courage to Say Something That Matters

This is where most podcasters fall down. They talk, but they don't say anything or share deeply. They fill time instead of providing value. They play it safe instead of taking stands.

Your first few episodes will suck. Your voice will sound weird to you. You'll stumble over words and forget your train of thought. You need the courage to publish them anyway and the guts to keep improving. And most importantly, be real. Because if you don't show up fully as yourself, why should anyone listen?

5. It Has to Be About THEM

Here's the question that will make or break your show: What is your audience walking away with? Not what are you getting out of it, but what are they getting? Entertainment? Education? Inspiration? A new perspective? News?

If you can't answer this clearly, you don't have a show, you have an audio diary.

The Real Question You Need to Ask

Before you buy that microphone or design that logo, ask yourself: Am I ready for the uncomfortable self-discovery and painful work of putting myself out there, knowing I might fail publicly?

Because that's what you're really signing up for. Not a fun creative outlet or a passive income stream. You're committing to showing up consistently, improving constantly, and serving an audience that might not even exist yet.

If these questions are tripping you up, good. Sit with that discomfort. Write about it. Talk to people who've been there. The podcasting world doesn't need another vanity project, it needs voices with something real to say and the persistence to keep saying it.

The Bottom Line

Podcasting isn't about having the perfect setup or the most polished delivery. It's about having the consistency and courage to keep going when no one's clapping. It's about choosing the hard work of creating something meaningful over the easy dopamine hit of starting something new.

So before you hit record, ask yourself: Am I ready to do this even when it's hard? Even when it's lonely? Even when it feels like nobody cares?

If the answer is yes, then maybe you're ready to start a podcast.

*Lauren the Seeker helps humans and brands tell their stories. She has two podcasts: one on spirituality called *Holding it Lightly*, and an interview-style podcast with business leaders about the human behind the title called *Humans & Brands*.*