

Episode 1: Our Story: From 9-5 to Over \$100k/month Blogging Business

Welcome to the *Launch Your Blog Biz Podcast*. I'm your host, Lauren McManus. I used to be a full time tax accountant and CPA with a whole lot of limiting beliefs, and "I can't"s whenever I thought about starting my own business. Fast forward a few months, and I quit my job after starting and growing my first blog to six figures in just a year. This is my space to share, and yours to listen and grow, about how to build and scale your own blogging business and design a life on your terms. Let's get started!

Lauren: Hey, ya'll! Welcome to our first episode of the podcast. Man, I can't believe that this is finally happening. I think alex and I have been talking about starting a podcast for what feels like a couple of years now. And, to be honest, the timing just never quite felt right. And we'll get into why that was a little bit later. But, here we are! We're getting started, and I am so excited for ya'll to be joining us on this journey today.

And speaking of us, I have a very special guest for you today on this very first inaugural episode. I'd like to introduce you to my fellow cofounder of Create and Go, and my amazing business partner, Alex Nerney.

Alex: Notice when she says "amazing" we feel that hint of sarcasm. That slight little bit of "eh-eh-eh...amazing-ish." It's great to be here.

Lauren: I don't know what you're talking about.

Alex: Yeah, yeah, whatever.

Lauren: Well, guys, we're so excited to kick this off with you today. In this episode, we want to share with you our story and our journey to where we are today. WE're going to talk a bit about the early days, where we were before, before we started this whole blogging thing, plus some updates from us that you may not have been aware of, and what the heck we've been up to lately..

And towards the end of this episode, were going to talk about why we started this podcast, and what you can expect from us in the future.

So, let's get this thing kicked off, Alex! What do you think about telling them a bit more about how we met, because it's a bit of an interesting story, and a bit about how we got started on this whole blogging train.

Alex: So, funny enough, Lauren and I--single, having fun in Dallas--met on Tinder of all places. Now, social media dating or app dating is a little more popular now than it was back then. But, yeah...we met from a fateful right swipe.

So I've always been telling people for years now--like, looking to start a million-dollar business? The key is to get on Tinder and just start swiping. You never know what you might get!

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But, no, we met on Tinder, at the time living in uptown Dallas. Just having fun, living the young, boozy brunch life.. And somewhere around in that area we had been, ya know, started dating, and been dating for a little while, and we just sort of realized, ya know, hey, there's some problems with the lives we've been living. I was a personal trainer at the time, and you were obviously a CPA, and we were just really struggling to enjoy our lives again. We felt like there was always more month than money, but more importantly, we just always felt like we just weren't allowed to do the things we wanted to do.

Lauren and I, I don't believe, had insane travel aspirations back then; but we certainly wanted more freedom than what we had. And...that was sort of the beginning to the blogging journey.

Was that, ya know I had started a few websites before, and had played around with a few different ideas, but I was, you know, working on a website, working from my computer. And, funny enough, I was working on it, and how I describe it to people was I was ambitiously working on something, and you saw, and you were like, "Oh, that's interesting." My favorite day was the day I was trying to work on graphics for the website. I was trying to work on creating like some image or something. And Lauren looked at it over my shoulder, and was like, "Wow, that is terrible!"

If there's anything that Lauren is, she'll tell you some brutal, honest truths. And that's why I'm so excited for this podcast and for our listeners, because they're going to get to know--you know, I think a lot of people know me from YouTube, but they're going to love you.

But, yeah, so what happened was I'm working on these graphics, and they are...they are garbage, and she just sorta, like, she like, politely moves me from my seat, and hops in there. And that was the first day we kinda like started working together. And, we started with some failures and with some other things as well. But that was kinda the introduction to blogging, was two people just wanted something different--and just like many of you sitting there today want something different for your lives. And we just started. You know? And we were just like, and we didn't know where we were going, we just had some hopes and some dreams. And that's where it all began.

Lauren: Alex, I think you forgot about the part where you also had really, really bad grammar. It was just like ten run-on sentences, missing any kind of punctuation, you would like randomly capitalize words in the middle of your sentences. It was just god-awful. And I'm, like, I'm really uptight about my grammar, and I'm reading this and I'm like, "Oh, wow, this is bad."

But Alex is right. This is kinda how it started.

And, you know, he always knew that he wanted to be an entrepreneur of some sort. And I suppose as a personal trainer, he was already on that path, because he was setting his own wages, he was freelancing and working for himself.

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But I was the complete opposite. I was definitely climbing the corporate ladder at my small accounting firm in Dallas. And, I had, I was actually studying for my CPA exams when I met Alex. And I had been working in that field for a few years at that point. And when I began to help him out with the website, I did find it very fun and very refreshing because it was something entirely new.

And I did have a knack for some of it. But, I'm so thankful for Alex, because if he hadn't shown me this lifestyle, I never would have discovered it on my own. And it definitely took a bit of a mindset shift for me in those early days. And I'm telling you this because I know that a lot of you are in that place as well.

To be honest, I thought that it would have taken so much more, looking back, for me to transition from that lifestyle into what we have today, you know, quitting my job, and we'll talk more about that in a few minutes. But it actually was so much easier than I thought, because those little bits of just fixing images here and there, and fixing Alex's grammar, and just beginning to learn some of what he was doing--and of course, he had no idea what he was doing, either. Neither of us had any idea.

We were just taking you know, courses, and looking at what others were doing online, and just literally trying to figure it out. But I just found that I just really, really began to enjoy the process. And from there, in those first couple of months, Alex and I worked so many nights, and so many weekends. We kind of dropped off the map. We didn't tell all of our friends what we were doing, because most of them probably wouldn't have supported us. We told a few of our close friends, though, "We're not going to brunch anymore until this is over," and nobody quite understood, of course. But we knew that this was important to us. And Alex, you remember those nights of cooking eggs and rice constantly?

Alex: The eggs and rice thing was an interesting time. Because, we were, at the time, we were building up these businesses, and we were trying to get things to go, right?. And while I did bring to this space a lot of previous knowledge in general on the internet and kinda how it works, there was such a lack of true understanding of what we were getting into. And so, what we would do, is we would spend pretty much all the extra money we had on buying courses, on buying products, on buying this and that and this training, and this software that sucks, and this thing that wasn't any good, and we just spent so much money on it.

We were like, how can we cut out all of our other expenses? Well, we spent a ton of money on brunch, and that takes a ton of time, so we cut that out. But then it was food, you know. And so for a while, we just ate eggs and rice just every day. And the thing I remember the most was like in the morning, I would put ketchup on it, and in the evening is I would put, like, salsa. That was my mix-up. You know, Like, adding some variety in there.

And Lauren's face of disgust for what I'm saying right now is cracking me up. But, that's how it worked. That was the only, like, variety we had in our diet, because eggs were so cheap, and rice is just obnoxiously inexpensive. We wanted to put every bit of money into the business. But

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it just goes back to show, like, the level of commitment we had to making this happen was extraordinary. Where it was like, we are going to make this happen.

Lauren: I mean, I remember at one point in growing our business, we actually had color coded our wardrobe in a way that we couldn't wear more than one accent color. We've done some weird things in the name of productivity to start these businesses.

Alex: I had forgotten about that, thank you.

Lauren: Yeah, we'll save that one for another day, because we were definitely a bit successful at that point and didn't really need to be doing that. But, we've done some weird stuff.

Alex: When you are doing things like that, that's when I know somebody's going to be successful. When they're willing to sacrifice certain things in their life to do something else.

But yeah, that's a great memory, Lauren.

Lauren: so, ya'll, as health bloggers, we definitely do not recommend eating eggs and rice every single day. We can't officially advise ya'll on that, because it's probably not the healthiest thing. And we didn't eat it every single night day after day, week after week. We had some variety in there.

Alex: You mean a chicken breast occasionally slipped in there, right?

Lauren: I remember some salmon here and there, when it was on sale, frozen.

Alex: Here and there.

Lauren: But, I said as health bloggers, that was what Alex and I were doing. But, at the time, we didn't even know that we were bloggers. We literally just had what we called a health and fitness website. It was just, at that point, an idea of health and wellness, because we both had that background, Alex, professionally, he had some certifications in it, as well as experience; and I had just gotten off a stint of being a crazy, gluten-free vegan for a couple of years, read all kinds of books about it, and was just very passionate about it.

So this really was just a health and wellness website that we wanted to make some kind of money online from. And we really had no idea where that was coming from yet.

And that's really how we got started on this. It was actually called Health and Happy Hour, and it was meant for young people. I think that we were 25 or 26 at the time. And we were brunching a lot, very boozy brunches, you know, doing the whole bar scene, because we were young, and we wanted to help people stay in shape but also have their social lives--because that was what we were doing.

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Unfortunately, this caused us to spend the first few months just really trying absolutely everything, and 99% of those things did not work. We spent money on courses and all kinds of stuff that just weren't right for us at the right time. And it was more about what we wanted, and we didn't yet know anything about how to truly build an audience, and put that audience first. We didn't know how to listen to people yet, we didn't know how to get people really to our blog yet or to our website. And there were just so many different ways that we went wrong there. And we are going to give you a whole episode on this actual first failure of this website.

Alex: We took photos. We have spectacularly cringey and terrible photos as evidence and proof. Man, we took ones with sunglasses on, poppin mimosas--we had too many mimosas to drink that day. That was clearly what happened, because we thought that was a good idea. Like, we need profile photos with us, like, drinking stuff.

Lauren: I think the biggest lesson, the biggest "too long, didn't read" of this, is that you can't actually get rich drinking mimosas and taking amateur photos of your dinner and putting them on the internet. This was the first lesson that we learned in trying to make money online.

But at this point, we did know that we were really, really enjoying what we were doing--you're probably like, "obviously--you were just getting drunk off mimosas"--but even the business side of it, and creating the content, and sharing it, and learning about social media, learning about all this stuff. It was still really fun. And we enjoyed it so much more than we enjoyed our full time jobs. Like, I remember working on my blog between breaks, in the mornings and the evenings, even while I was at work, because I just enjoyed it so much.

So we still knew that, you know, we're gonna make this thing, but we need a new idea. And we stuck to health and fitness, because it was still what we knew, what we had experience in, and still what we were really passionate about.

So, fast-forward a few months, after this failure, and we've now started a second blog. Now, it's still in the health and fitness space, because this is what we know. But this second time around, on our second blog, we wrote some more content, and people didn't seem to hate us this time. But we were still very wary. We wrote in a very different style of content, and, ya'll, we actually didn't put our faces on this blog for, I'd say, what do you think, Alex, like, three or four months. Do you remember that?

Alex: Yeah

Lauren: We were still scared, to be honest. Still scared, and unsure, and trying to get our toes wet. But at some point, we did start to get some traction from it. And Alex, do you want to talk about how this second time was a bit different.

Alex: Yeah, so, what happened was more like a smoother transition. Like, we were like, we have another idea, let's try something different. And so we started a website called Avocado. And the big difference there was that, what we talked about in Health and Happy Hour was we

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were so focused on ourselves. We were just so focused on what we wanted to talk about, what we thought was interesting, what we thought was funny. We totally lacked the understanding that a business is about other people. It's about the people consuming your content. It's not about you being cool, or you being a celebrity, or whatever. It's about these solutions and problems that you're helping other people with.

As somebody who likes to hear themselves talk, you have to recognize--

Lauren: (he does)

Alex: Yeah, it's true. You have to recognize that, oh my gosh, this is about other people. In this culture of Instagram fame, and I'm gonna be a famous blogger, and people are gonna look at me, and be all, "She's so beautiful" or "he's so awesome, look at all the things he does", the truth is that nobody cares. People care about themselves. It's natural, it's not a bad thing.

Like, we definitely do care about others. But, when someone is spending money, they're usually looking to solve a problem. And that problem means that you need to frame everything you do, as a future successful blogger, from the aspect of, "How does this serve somebody else?" And that was what we did with Avocado. That was the massive difference. It wasn't like, changing the whole system, or starting something completely new. It was just more about like, how can we take what we've learned here, and make it more focused on our customers. And, lo and behold, some things started to happen.

Lauren: You know, and I think we've fast-forwarded probably a bit too much. Because by the time that we had figured, begun to really figure this part out, you know, really paying attention to other people, I think this was still even a couple months after we had quit our jobs. So I wanna back up there for just a second, because at the stage where Alex and I quit our jobs, we actually weren't making a dime from our blog. Absolutely nothing. We hadn't yet made any money, so this is still probably about four or five months in from the very beginning of first failed blog all the way to this point, still hadn't actually made a dime.

But we were beginning to get some traction, we had written some content, we began to get some people and some traffic in the door, thanks to Pitnerest traffic. And, at that point, we knew that we had something. We knew that people were listening. We really did feel like we just needed to figure out that last bit of, like, how do we actually monetize this. I know Alex with all of his confidence was gunning for both of us to quit our jobs basically when we first started. It was really about me needing to make that leap, especially because at this point, I had just gotten licensed as a CPA officially. And I had been working towards that for years. I had to get my master's degree for it, and I studied for several months for those exams. But I was still trading all of my hours to my accounting firm. I was working nine to five, but it ended up being more like seven to six, to try to avoid traffic, and I was actually working on my blog quite a bit in the early hours at work, and it was really just getting kind of stressful. And, Alex, I'll let you tell this story about the day that I decided, because I know that it was pretty monumental for you.

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Alex: Yeah, for sure. So here I am, the rogue entrepreneur, trying to convince his girlfriend, who's a CPA, one of the most type-A people I know, that she should just go rogue, and she should quit her job. And, we're not making any money. We get on this hike in Seattle, and we're with Lauren's family at the time. And we're just on this beautiful hike, and Lauren actually pitched the idea of, What if we moved to Washington? You know, what if we moved out here, and just gave the website an honest shot. And I was like, You know, that's what I was hoping you would say. You know, and that was like where I was at.

But the day that she decided that she was ready to go all-in was different than even that day. That was just a sort of, like, pipe dream, maybe this is going to happen. I still remember it to this day because, we had gotten back from the trip. And, you know, you can think all these things and get excited about things. But, you know, it's that famous Zig Zigler quote, "Motivation is like bathing. We recommend it daily." And, there was just this, like, you get back in your job and in your workflow, and there's this monumental decision that Lauren needs to make, essentially, to quit. And that is, Is she going through another tax season, or not? Because there's no way she can do a full tax season, working twelve hour, fourteen hour days--and work on this website.

And so I'm just sitting there, and I'm working on stuff, and I get this text message from her, and it was one of those Instagram posts. And it was just something, it was the one where it was like "you regret the decisions that you don't make in life." And she sent this paragraph, and I can't give you the exact words, but it was the moment that I knew that she had decided to decide. And I'm getting just chills energy just talking about it, because it was just such a, "I'm all in, I'm going to do this, I'm going to make this happen."

That decision, that mentality, for 99% of people that try to start a business or try to do something, they don't ever make it there. And she just had decided to decide. And on that day, you know, I felt like we were going to be successful--but on that day, I knew it. I knew without a shadow of a doubt that we are going to succeed. And it's still, like, one of my favorite days, as far as this process goes. Because, you know, we're not making any money. We just have a little bit of traffic, we got a lot of hopes and dreams, but we had committed. We were just like, "We are going to do this thing!" And then our, just, actions naturally, around that, just began to change.

Lauren: Yeah, that was a fun conversation I had to have with my dad after that. Uh, actually, thankfully, he was pretty supportive. He has also been able to travel the world with his job.

Alex: You guys think it's hard to have to ask your girl's dad for their hand in marriage. Try telling that same dad that raised that daughter she's going to quit her full-time job as an accountant to, you know, go make internet money with some random guy who's a personal trainer. That was a tough conversation! And I was really worried that Neal was going to absolutely hate me by the end of that.

Lauren: Yeah, my dad was like, "I'm sorry, y-you just got a CPA. What, why? What's happening?" But, no, he was supportive. And that was really what kicked off Alex and I moving

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to Seattle, thankfully his dad had an empty house up there, and we were able to live there rent-free. And at the time, we cancelled even our health insurance. Because, we literally didn't leave that house until we started making any money. And so, I think our only bill at that time was our cell phone plan. And that was really the whole reason for it, was we thought, well, we both have some savings, neither of us have kids, you know, we don't have other responsibilities. It was like, worst-case scenario, we do this for a year, we make absolutely no money, we blow through our savings, and then, what? We go get another job again. You know, we're still young. It's gonna be fine. And that was what led us to do it. We both thought, you know what, we'd be kicking ourselves if we didn't give this a real go. So, we moved all of our stuff. We had six suitcases between the two of us that had all of our belongings. We got rid of or gave away everything else, sold all of our furniture, we packed those six suitcases up, and we moved to Seattle. And from there, we worked on the blog every day and every night.

We didn't have any friends up there. I actually had some friends up there that we would go and see on the weekends occasionally, when we allowed ourselves a few hours of free time. But we really just shut ourselves up for a few months to make this thing work. And, ya'll, that ended up making all the difference, because with both of us devoting all of our time to it, we actually made money in that very first month. Yeah, we made \$127. Or, \$124,82...I used to have it memorized, but it's somewhere in that range. But, it was only a hundred some-odd dollars, and that obviously didn't even cover the expenses that we were spending, it was basically nothing. But it was something, in that we made something from nothing. We proved that we could make money online. So, at that point, we just needed to figure out how to scale it and how to make more.

In those first few months, we threw everything up at the wall, and a few things stuck. And, what ended up happening is that we actually doubled our revenues the next month. And then we doubled them again, and then again. And we actually ended up doubling our revenues for the first five months of business. And really, the rest is kinda history from there.

Alex: Yeah. I do want to emphasize, like, one of the best days with Avocado really quick--because I would hate if this story didn't get shared to our audience. You know, we had just been putting so much time, and energy, and effort, and then this one day in particular, we had finally decided to make our first product, right. So we make this product, we launch it right before our friends flew in to be with us for a week.

So we make this product, we launch it, and then we go out and we hang out with them. And so the entire week, you know, I'm just kind of nervously, casually checking my cell phone for sales. And you know, nothing's come in, nothing's come in. Three days go by. Five days go by. Seven days go by. And it's just like, man, it was a tough feeling. It was a depressing feeling. Because it's like, while we were making some money, we weren't making like, real money yet. While it was growing, we were like, yeah, two grand a month isn't going to pay for everything we need.

So, we're sitting there, and I just remember going into the account when we got back. And I looked back there, and I noticed that the email notifications were not on. And I checked the thing, and I see that we had, like, eight or ten sales of this e-book that we just launched, for, I

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think it was like \$27. And I just remember running up to you, and just being, like, “The numbers--were off-- blah-blah-blah!!” And we were just jumping, and screaming, and hugging, and we were just so excited in that moment, because it was like, the amount of effort, and the amount of energy, and the eggs and rice and everything in between that we had to put in to make it something, made everything. And, it was just such a beautiful and awesome moment that I’ll always remember. It was so great. And I would hate for you guys not to hear it.

Lauren: Yeah, Alex is right. That was definitely some life-changing moments there. There are some--quite a few, now--turning points that we’ve had along the way, and some of those moments are now so ingrained in our memories, because they were so much more, yes, powerful, because they were turning points along our route to success; but, ya’ll there were so many emotions behind so many of these decisions, as well. Like, some of the highs were so high, and some of the lows were so low. I mean, tears--mostly from me, some from Alex, at times, too.

There were definitely many emotions throughout this journey, and so, some of these memories are just much, much stronger than others. In that first year, with that health and wellness blog, we had one month where we made \$40,000 in a single month blogging. And, we actually ended up making \$103,000 that first year with the blog. Which was just crazy! We went from having absolutely no idea what we were doing, to actually making something rock-solid and successful by the end of that first year.

And, a few months later, we began the journey to making Create and Go. Which, at the time, really was more of a pipe dream of ours. We both have a background in business--me in accounting, and Alex in general business. And because he sold his first e-book out of college as well, we always knew that we would like to go into something in the business field; and especially by this point, we learned that our favorite parts about running this business were actually the growing part of it. What our health and wellness blog actually turned into, was, it migrated from us teaching people our age how to be healthy while still going to brunch and whatnot; to actually teaching middle-aged women how to lose weight. And we’ll talk more about that transition in another episode, and why it became that. But it did, and along the way, it just became something different than what we had originally wanted, and we began to really become passionate about the growth aspect of this business, this blog that we had turned into a business. So, this is kind of how we began Create and Go. And, yeah, Alex, I’ll let you talk a bit more about that first month in Nicaragua.

Alex: Yeah. it’s crazy. So we just start to make some money with Avocado. And, you know, we have a really good month, and a couple solid months, and then we found this random group online called the WiFi Tribe, and it was like, “Yeah, come co-live in Nicaragua,” and we were like, “We’re digital nomads now!” And so, we run off to Nicaragua. And it was right around that time that, you know, we were looking around at all the advice that we had gotten. You know, like, when you get to feeling successful, you do, like, some reflecting at points. And some of the points, what we saw was, man, 99% of the products and things that we bought back in the day did not really help us.

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And I remember we were reading--and, not gonna name the blogger--but reading somebody's article about something, and being like, "That's not very good advice." You know? Like, it's just not what we have found to be true at all. It's not what we think is correct. And we were just like, "We need to start our second blog. We need to start something that teaches people the real way to do this." And what happened over the next few months was the most interesting part.

The most interesting part was, while writing health and wellness advice was something Lauren and I would do--we'd almost pump out an article a day, you know, at periods of time--the content writing for Create and Go for me, it was insane. I could write 3,000 words in four hours, because of the level of detail and the level of passion we had around it was so high at that time. I mean, think, a year ago, I'm running around, you know, teaching overweight people, like, to lose weight, and they just, like, laugh at me, while I'm like, "Hey, you should diet more," and they're, like, "Eh, no, probably not." And then, Lauren is, like, suffering, like she has all these people that drop boxes of receipts off at her desk, and is like, "Hey, yeah, can you just take care of this for me?"

We're in Nicaragua right now, there's a monkey running across your pool, and we're just like, "We need to teach people how to do this, and we need to teach people how to get here." So the amount of passion, the feelings that we had around blogging and everything is so strong. So, yeah, that's how Create and Go began.

Lauren: And I think that, why Create and Go has been so powerful to us, and has been so powerful to our students is that we teach from the standpoint of all the right and wrong turns that we took with this first health and wellness blog. There are now a lot of people out there teaching people how to do all kinds of things, and most of us are just learning on the job, right?. And many people are really teaching while they're doing it, but they haven't yet found a whole lot of success.

But, on Create and Go, Alex and I teach from the standpoint of what has truly worked and not worked for us with this health and wellness blog. And, it's evolved since then because it's been a few years now. And now we teach about all of the different right and wrong turns that we've had, and we've now grown two successful businesses, as well as multiple YouTube channels. So we have learned a lot along the way, but that honesty and transparency that we try to always give our audience is what makes us personally a bit different and a bit special on Create and Go, and what I love about that month in Nicaragua is that was the month that Alex started the YouTube channel for Create and Go. And, if you look back at some of those videos, man, they are pretty rough.

Alex: Wow.

Lauren: He has got full-on surfer hair, and is really just reading the screen that shows our blog articles that were written back then. But really just talking about our story, and sharing his personal insights on it. And, people loved that content. Even though there are so many

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perfectly-polished people out there on YouTube already, people loved and grativated to that content. It really became a huge lesson learned for us along the way. And it was right at the beginning of Create and Go, and it's really something that has stuck with us. And, you'll hear me talking a lot in this podcast about stuff like that, and why we tried to publish stuff, you know, not perfectly polished all the time, because it just makes us a bit more real and relatable.

And it's one of the biggest lessons that we want our students, and listeners and readers to also understand in that, it's really just about putting yourself out there, and helping others. And, it's less so about all that perfectionism. I just really think it's a great thing that we do at Create and Go. That's really what we're about here, and now that we've kind of segued into that, I do want to tell ya'll that we have been through so many right and wrong turns along this journey, and not just professionally and in terms of business, both personally as well.

And I want to tell ya'll now what you can really expect from us in this podcast, because now we have started multiple businesses, multiple YouTube channels, projects, there's been many other failures along the way. But ya'll, the learning process never stops, and we are still in the thick of it every single day with our business. And that's why we want to start this podcast--because we want to share that with ya'll on a more constant basis. We want to be able to give ya'll some more real-life insight into what our lives are like in both of our businesses.

And, it's going to be the stuff that you can't find on our blog or in our courses. It's not just going to be the marketing strategies and tactics, or the blogging tips--and don't worry, we're going to share those--but we want to talk more about some of the personal stuff. Like, for instance, what it's been like running our business in a relationship, but also, post-breakup. Because now that ya'll have heard all these great stories about how Alex and I got started, and met on Tinder and all that stuff, the truth is that running a business together was really, really difficult for us at times. And we have now been broken up--we're not together in the romantic sense--for, goodness, three years, now, Alex?

Alex: Something like that. Yeah, it's been a little bit. Don't say it like that, though--it makes me feel old! Yeah, and to echo off that, we just never felt like the blog in particular was the right space to share some of those more intimate details. We never wanted to be people that leveraged their social problems to get ahead. But now, for us, it's more this platform juts provides such an opportunity for connections. Because it just is more conversational. And it is something that, we can kind of let our guard down a little bit. I think our favorite video that we get in our courses all the time, and we call it--I'm not sure if I'm allowed to cuss on this podcast, can I get a yes or no, Lauren?

Lauren: I actually don't know...

Alex: Well, she might bleep this out, but it's called "Honest Blogger S***," and what it is is just Lauren and I just getting hammered drunk, and talking honestly about where we were at, and that time in our lives, and where this course, who it's for, and where we were at, and just honest stories about it. And I think people really connect with that authenticity, and that's again, one of

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the reasons why I'm so excited about this podcast. I just think the YouTube has given me a chance to connect honestly, you know, with our audience, but you haven't seen the whole other half, which is Lauren.

And we have stories about, you know, like she said--we're not together. There were some seriously dark times in there. Like, really rough, really bad times, that we had to go through, and we had to figure out. And we want to tell you guys this, we want you guys to know these things, because if there's one thing that we learned from the YouTube channel, from every piece of content that we've made, from the stories that we get, from the success, from the tears, to getting the testimonial, to the yelling and the fighting, and the anger that can come up when you still have to run a business with somebody that you've broken up with was the authenticity was kind of our favorite thing, was hearing about that from people.

And you know, when Lauren does this podcast, she's going to be in Mexico or be in some foreign country, and there's going to be cars in the background, and there's going to be some stuff, but we are always going to deliver that. We are always going to tell you the things that you need to hear. Maybe not what you want to hear, which is what we feel like will make us different from those around your. And I'm just, I couldn't be more excited about what this podcast is going to mean for you guys; but also, just being frank, being authentic, I'm very excited for Lauren in this moment.

Lauren: Well, thanks, Alex. Goodness! He's exactly right, ya'll. That's exactly what this podcast is about. Because we want to share what it was really like quitting our jobs. And not just, you know, that flat story that we can tell you all, but I mean the emotions around it. Because, I receive that question a lot from our students. You know, "How do I know when the timing is right?" What I often reply is, "Well, it's just a feeling." And I really need a platform to be able to elaborate more on some of those things. Things like, how freaking terrified I was to get on camera and record my first YouTube video, or record videos for my courses. Because I know that many of you share those same fears. Ya'll, we're going to have all kinds of guests on this show. We're going to have Alex on here all the time, and all kinds of other people, including people who really know their stuff, on topics like Pinterest, SEO, Instagram, money mindset, all those things that are really, really important to you on this journey. We're also going to have interviews with some of our successful students. So that you can hear some of their success stories, and how others are doing really awesome things in their own way.

Anything else I'm forgetting, Alex, in terms of what we're going to be sharing here, before we wrap up?

Alex: I think the biggest thing will just be awesome stories, and the most important thing is that as we continue to move forward, and as blogging continues to change, we're going to be here, us, our team we've gotten around us, are going to be here for you.

Lauren: Ya'll, above all, we really just needed a space to reach you regularly. Because we don't really do much of the Instagram things, and YouTube is already serving our traffic purposes, we

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don't want to write articles every single week, and they're just not as personal as just talking to you. So we knew that it was time, and probably past time, to start this podcast and share our stories with you.

So, this is it, guys! We're wrapping up this first episode. Whew! How do you feel, Alex?

Alex: I feel good! How do you feel?

Lauren: I feel great! Guys, we're so excited to take this journey with you. Thank you, Alex, for joining us on this first episode.

Alex: It was a pleasure, Lauren McManus. We'll talk soon.

Lauren: We'll see ya'll next time!

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