



# So You Want to Start a Podcast?

**Practical Steps to Communicate  
Your Meaningful Message**



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# What's the Deal with Podcasts?



"I've written a lot of blog posts by now... are people actually making time to read them?"

Let's face it: we're busy people. The few precious minutes we have in between tasks and the occasional trip to the bathroom usually find us on our phone scrolling through anything that may capture our attention long enough to stay.

This is a relatively new pattern in human behavior that communicators need to understand: **if you're not connecting with your audience within 8 seconds, you will lose them.**

I decided to start podcasting in 2017 when I realized that written words alone would not connect with my people as well as my voice. People need to feel the real person behind your message, understand your story, and connect with your purpose.

They need to know they're not alone in this world, and podcasting has become an easy way to keep the attention of busy people and infuse hope into their lives while they go about their business.

If you want to start a podcast, here are eight basic things you need to understand before you dive in. (You'll be a better person for knowing these things first. I promise.)

Use these practical steps to start building your meaningful message, because your voice matters to the people who are waiting to listen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenna'.



# 1 Know Your Why

“Before we can stand out, we must first get clear on what we stand for.”

-Simon Sinek, business leader and author of *Find Your Why*

## Know Your Why

Start by asking yourself a series of *why* questions: Why do you want to start this podcast? Then take that answer and ask "why?" again. Do this seven times and you will get to the bottom of your biggest motivation. This will help you craft your mission statement.

## Know Your Audience

When you know your *why*, get specific on *who* you're serving. Your specific style, flavor, personality, and message will not be for everyone at first, so speak to the people who often ask you questions about a particular topic. This is called *niching down*. (i.e., People > women > women who are mothers > moms who work at home > moms who work at home and homeschool > homeschooling moms who are faith-based)

Get specific, and people will be more likely to remember what you have to offer. You can always pivot later, but start on a strong message.

## Know Your Communication Style

Are you a generally talkative and joyful person? Or are you more quiet and serious? Maybe you're an educator hoping to inspire people to be better. Get comfortable with your natural motivation and style of talking. Build the intro music and general feeling for your podcast around that style. How do you want your audience to feel when they listen to you? Excited? Motivated? Calm? Connected?

Think about their needs and how you can naturally infuse your authentic self into their listening experience.



## Know Your Audience

"Never stop listening to your audience." -David Copperfield, performer

It's one thing to know *who* you're talking to, it's quite another to know *what* they need. We may think we're providing valuable information or motivation, but what is that knowledge based upon?

We need to become increasingly familiar with the core needs of our audience. We call this the *felt need*: the feelings that speak strongly to their identity and purpose as individuals and what motivates them to change.

For my audience, a huge *felt need* for homeschool mothers is feeling secure about how much they're doing to educate their children. Character education is also important to their foundational needs as parents, particularly Christian parents. So I focus on topics related to those deeply felt values.

### Ask yourself

What kinds of questions are they asking about problems they face, or goals they hope to accomplish?

What do they need to hear the most that will encourage them to keep moving forward in confidence?

What resources can you provide for them in a conveniently packaged file or link that they can access and share with others?

### Practice Listening Well

If you're living among them or interacting with them online, pay attention to the topics they share about and the questions they ask. Build your content from there.



# Organize Your Message

"Organizing is what you do before you do something, so that when you do it, it is not all mixed up." -A.A. Milne, *English author & playwright*

When we know our *why*, our *who*, and *what* they need, **now you get to decide *how* you're going to deliver it.**

Your platform will be ever-growing, ever-evolving, and you will learn more the longer you do it. But if you want to start a podcast, it will help you immensely to develop the foundation of your message ahead of time.

The time you dedicate to message development will affect how well your audience connects with you. One of the best ways to begin is to start with a ***story***.

Human beings are naturally drawn into storytelling, and you can organize your message into this framework. Begin with your own story:

- What you've struggled to overcome or understand
- What sparked a change in you to begin a different journey
- What obstacles you had to overcome
- What you learned that added depth to your journey
- What your life looks like now that you're on the other side (or continuing to move forward)

You can organize your message to your audience to follow the same pattern. Break up each topic and create sub-topics that follow the same flow for each episode. This method makes episode planning so much easier, and before you know it, there is a whole year's worth of content.

Planning can be simpler than you think when the message is already there!



# Hardware & Software

"One of my mottos is 'The right tool for the right job.'"

*-Martha Stewart, entrepreneur & lifestyle expert*

The first question new podcasters ask is, "What kind of equipment do I get?" The answer depends on what is actually needed to get started, and what you can afford. There will always be a *good*, *better*, and *best* option, but starting out only requires the basics. (Bare minimum marked with \*)

Here are the basic categories and options for the electronic equipment (hardware), and the computer programs (software), and other important elements that contribute to sound & lighting quality.

## Hardware

- GOOD: earbuds\*
- BETTER: condenser microphone
- BEST: USB / Condenser microphone (Rode, Blue Yeti, Audio Technica)

## Computer Connections\*

- Macbook Air / Pro
- PC

## Software\*

- Mac - Garageband
- Skype with Call Recorder
- Adobe - Audition

**Strong Wifi\*** (preferably hardwire connected to router)

## Environment

- Natural Light\*
- Ring Light

## Video Recording Options

- Zoom
- Tripod
- Ring Light w/ iPhone stand

## Hosting Services\*

- Libsyn
- Podbean
- Anchor

## Theme Music

- Melody Loops



# Listen to yourself

"Your voice is your tool and represents you. It's very important to have a good voice where you can be understood." -*Jacqueline Bisset, actress*

When I first began to record my voice, I could not stand listening to the playback. There is something surreal and unnerving about hearing your own sound, and every podcaster, speaker, and performer I've talked to has felt the same way at the beginning.

You will be tempted to put on a different, "better" sounding version of yourself - to play a part that you think is more appealing. **But the most authentic voice you can have is your own.** When you can finally let go and let loose, people can tell. They can even *hear you smiling* because your natural energy comes through the microphone when you're comfortable and confident about your message.

## Practice Volume and Work Out Filler Words

Finding your own level of comfort will take time, so keep working at it. If you have a naturally soft voice, practice adding a stronger pitch by opening your mouth wider and be expressive when you speak (even if it's only audio recording).

If you're naturally loud, back up a bit and play with the levels in your software to arrive at a place where the listener can hear your clear message.

Don't be afraid to do many takes when you get started. The first time will almost always be messy, and you will need to work out the "ahs" and "ums" when you're filling the silence. Get comfortable pausing and hop onto the next sentence with ease. You will be your own worst critic, but it will come the more you keep showing up.





# Social Media & Personal Branding

"Social media is about sociology and psychology more than technology."  
- Brian Solis, digital analyst, speaker & author

Social media is the vehicle for your message. Know where your people hang out. If you interact with your audience on Instagram, put more of your time into posts and videos there. You can also do a quick poll to ask which outlets they use and how they prefer to receive information (Don't forget to build an email list!)



Podcasts can be promoted just about anywhere when you've a catchy name and main graphics to share. I highly recommend [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) as a simple and user-friendly design tool to design shareable graphics with your personalized logo and photos.



show your face!



## Extra Tips

- Tag guests or products you mention in your episode so they can share your content
- Use your headshot any chance you get! Connect your face to your voice.
- Use programs that will animate your sound waves and share snippets of the episode (Wave.co)



Facebook - posts, groups, videos, stories



Instagram - posts, groups, videos, stories



Twitter - posts, quotes, videos



YouTube - videos with captions or just sound



LinkedIn - Online resume & job connector



TikTok - 15, 30, or 60 second videos + sound



Pinterest - Long designed photo ads of episodes



Spotify - internet radio option for podcasts







# Hit Publish

"There is freedom waiting for you on the breezes of the sky. And you ask, "What if I fall?" Oh but my darling, what if you fly?" - *Erin Hanson, poet*

Even after you've recorded, edited, and set up your social media posts, the last brave thing you will do is hit "publish." This is the point where your heart may beat the hardest, because you realize that the precious words you've been holding onto are finally being released into the wide world.

Will there be critics? Most likely.

Will there be cynics? Yep.

Will there be naysayers who think you won't last? Definitely.

But are they doing the brave thing? Probably not.

The only people you need to concern yourself with are the people who need the words you have for them. If you focus on them and their felt needs - on serving them before yourself, they will hear you and want more.

While our impact can be measured in number of downloads and rating on iTunes, the real impact is a life that is changed for the better. You will always have self-doubt because... you're human. But you are doing a brave thing.

Seek to better yourself every day, and give yourself a goal to hit publish as often as you can. Take break when they are needed, record and re-record. Get up, and start again. Keep showing up and remind yourself who you're showing up for.

Podcasters everywhere are cheering for you.



# Why Your Voice Matters

You may think, "There are so many podcasts out there, why does it even matter if I start one? People have plenty of other options."

You're not wrong, but let me help you shift this perspective a bit.

Remember your *why*? At the end of the day, it all comes back to how you answer that question. When you are genuinely moved to help people solve problems, help them find resources they need to make life easy, comfort them in their time of need, or get them excited about new things, that motivation comes from deep inside of *you*.

Your message is part of who you are, and held within the folds of your own experience. Even though topics and seasons change, your motivation to help others is uniquely yours.

**Your communication style, coupled with your experience, skills, and values, make up a special offering to people who *only you* can reach.**

Even if your audience begins with your own family, you are probably discussing things on your podcast that may or may not be common around the dinner table or a family party. When you take the step to set up your message in a way that reaches many, you don't know how far it can go.

When you start a podcast, and your message is clear, your responsibility is to produce an opportunity for people to listen. People who need your voice to reach them exactly where they are.

Use your unique voice today to communicate your meaningful message.



# Join the Next Group Coaching Session!

If you're serious about starting your own podcast, I would love to walk with you on that journey. Use the link below to jump on my **Podcasting Made Simple** email list and get notified about upcoming group coaching sessions!

We will cover the eight points presented in this booklet, but in greater detail and in a live session with myself and other beginning podcasters who are there to support you.

Click below or cut and paste this link into your browser, and I can't wait to work with you!

[PracticalFamily.org/PodcastingMadeSimple](https://PracticalFamily.org/PodcastingMadeSimple)

