



**This Is Your Life Podcast**  
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Michael Hyatt

**Michele Cushatt:** Welcome to *This Is Your Life* with Michael Hyatt, where our goal is to help you win at work and succeed at life. My name is Michele Cushatt. I'm your cohost today, and joining me in the conversation is my good friend Michael Hyatt. Hey there, Michael.

**Michael Hyatt:** Hey, Michele. Good to hear your voice.

**Michele:** Same to you. Today we're talking about one of your favorite topics: blogging. In a recent episode of *This Is Your Life*, not that long ago, we detailed the reasons why every leader needs to have a blog. You believe very firmly that is absolutely true.

**Michael:** I do, because I think the best way to influence other people is with our thought leadership. Whether you're trying to create greater visibility for your business or you're trying to connect with other leaders or you're trying to express the vision of your company, whatever it is, I think a blog is a terrific way to do that.

**Michele:** Absolutely. It's inexpensive. It's a fairly easy medium to connect with people. It's also a great way to vet your own perspectives and what you're learning and your positions on different things. Anyway, we have talked about why every leader needs a blog. If you missed that episode, be sure to go back and listen in. We'll make sure we include the link for that in the show notes so you can see it.

Today we want to unpack what it takes to craft a killer blog post. Just because you want to have a blog and you think you're a blogger doesn't mean you and I know how to craft that killer blog post that's going to generate readership and traffic and all of that. Today Michael is going to break down his seven-step system for you.

It's going to be very practical, very hands-on. This is going to be one of those episodes you're going to want to come back and visit again and again. Before we dive into the how-to of that killer blog post, Michael, I want you to speak to what you mean exactly when you say "killer blog post." You actually mean something very specific defined by certain metrics, etcetera.

**Michael:** Yeah, I do. I don't mean it's one you just particularly like. There are certain blog posts I've written that have sunk without a ripple. I'm not talking about ones that some people in your industry necessarily like, that they're impressed by. I'm talking about success as measured by three specific metrics.

The first one is *traffic*. Did you get a lot of traffic on that blog post or not? Most blogging platforms, including WordPress, have some statistical information built in. I highly recommend, though, that anybody who's serious about blogging connect their blog with Google Analytics, which is kind of the gold standard in terms of measuring traffic.

I'm looking for blog posts that had a spike in traffic as compared to my usual traffic, the ones that are outperforming other blog posts I've written. There's a way to do that, but I'm not talking about what sometimes people refer to as *hits*. You know, they say, "How many hits are you getting?" A hit is an irrelevant measure. A hit simply measures the number of times a browser is making a call back to a server for a specific bit of information.

For example, if you write a blog post and there are five images on that webpage, between advertisements and maybe the image you use in the blog post, you're going to have five or six hits. You could have 30 hits. It doesn't mean anything. The relevant traffic you want or the way you want to measure it is as unique visitors. Google will give you that information: how many unique visitors looked at that particular post.

Maybe secondarily you might want to look at page views. Both of those are a way to measure traffic. The difference between a page view and a unique visitor is that you might have a unique visitor who reads three blog posts and that will show up as three page views, but I'm talking about page views for a specific post, so that can be as accurate as a unique visitor. That's the first metric.

**Michele:** Just for those who are listening here, and you mentioned this briefly, but when we talk about traffic, you gauge the success of a blog post... Well, I should just say this. Don't compare it to Michael Hyatt's traffic necessarily. If you're someone who's just starting, you may have a spike in traffic that goes from 25 unique visitors to 30, and that's a huge growth for you, so celebrate that. Be cautious about comparing those kinds of things to somebody else. You do want to see what is engaging and what kind of traffic you have, and those numbers will be different for every person.

**Michael:** That's right. It is important to make it relevant to your other blog posts, because what you're doing is... You're kind of in a lab as you're writing and you're looking for evidence of

what works better than other things. You're looking for the blog posts that really resonate as measured by traffic first, but then second by *engagement*.

This is why it's so important, I think, to allow for comments on your blog. As you know, Michele, I went through a period of time, about a year, where I didn't allow blog comments. I was frankly pretty busy and I felt like I couldn't give it the attention it deserved, but I came full circle. I repented of my evil ways.

**Michele:** Yes, you did. Your evil, evil ways.

**Michael:** I turned comments back on. The thing about it is blogging when it's done best is not a monologue; it's a dialogue. What I want to do when I'm writing is I want to start a conversation. If I've really hit the nail on the head, if I've created something that resonates, people are going to want to discuss it.

For example, I had a blog post this week where I was talking about *How Can You Optimize Your Computer for Top Productivity? Subtitle: 10 Utilities I Install First on Any New Device to Shave Time and Drive Results*. Well, I've gotten a bunch of comments on that, because whenever I write on technology, especially the apps I use, for whatever reason, people want to talk about that.

They have a ton of questions they want to ask me. They have follow-up. They want to argue with me. All that's good stuff. Engagement is a key sign of that. I think it's part of the definition of writing a killer blog post.

**Michele:** All right. So far we've talked about traffic is one metric. The second is engagement, which you really evaluate by looking at the comments and the amount of interaction you have. Like you, I love the engagement, to have that kind of ongoing feedback. Even when it's criticism or disagreement, I still enjoy the conversation about it. So you want to look at engagement, how many people are actually interacting with your content. What is that final metric you use to evaluate a killer blog post?

**Michael:** I'm looking for *shares*. In other words, I want to look at the number of Facebook "likes" or shares, and I want to look at Twitter and what's happening to it in social media. For example, on my blog post you can see this readily because I have these "share" buttons that track that kind of stuff, but you can also track it in things like Buffer or other apps that are specifically designed to do that.

If somebody really likes something, the first thing they want to do is share it. This is why it's such an important measure of a killer blog post. If nobody is commenting (no engagement), if

you don't have much traffic, and if you don't have much in the way of shares, it's not a killer blog post. If you take those three metrics and boil it down to one sentence, here's how I would define a killer blog post. If you want to write a killer blog post, just write stuff that people want to read and share. It's that simple.

**Michele:** That was a pretty profound sentence right there.

**Michael:** If people don't want to read it...

**Michele:** Exactly. A killer blog post is something people want to read and share. There you go, everyone. That's what we're aiming for. I just felt like it was so important as we began this how-to podcast that we really know what we're aiming for. Those were maybe some words you didn't understand or you hadn't heard before with regard to traffic, engagement, and sharing.

Basically we want to create the kind of content people are interested in and want to share with their friends. It's that simple. For those of us who invest the time to write a blog post, we certainly don't want to spend all of those hours agonizing over every word just to have it basically go out there and die.

**Michael:** Crickets.

**Michele:** Exactly. No crickets. So Michael, you're going to help us walk through seven steps to get the very most traction we possibly can for our blog posts. Correct?

**Michael:** Yes.

**Michele:** Let's dive into step one.

**Michael:** This was huge for me in about 2008. *Focus on your readers*. This is really when I hit the inflection point in 2008, when I went from about an average of 700 readers a month (700 unique visitors, to put it back in the language we began with) to about 20,000 readers a month. It was because I started focusing on my readers instead of focusing on me. As it turns out, most people are tuned in to the most popular radio station out there: WIIFM, "What's In It For Me?"

**Michele:** Okay, that was spectacular. Thank you for that. WIIFM. There we go, everyone.

**Michael:** That's what people want to know about.

**Michele:** It's true. Their attention span is pretty short, so "What's in it for me?" has to be answered within the first few seconds. Right?

**Michael:** Yeah. I think when people started blogging... A lot of people have figured this out now, but when people started blogging they were writing about them. Writing about you might be important if you're a celebrity. They care what you're eating for lunch or who you're hanging out with. I think as you build a personal brand that can also be somewhat important, but at the end of the day it's really about...*Are you helping other people solve their problems, answer their questions, meet their needs in some way?*

As I've taught for a long time, one of the best ways to do that is to do a reader survey. You have to become a student of your readers. Every year, with the exception of one year, since about 2008, maybe even earlier than that, I've done a reader survey. I ask them a bunch of what I would call *demographic questions* and *psychographic questions*, which are just two big words to explain two simple concepts.

You want to know the statistical information about your readers. What's the age of your audience on average? What's the gender of your audience? Do they have a specific religious worldview? What's their education level? You want to talk in a language that communicates with that audience.

Then you want to go into the psychographics. This is the basic motivations of why people do what they do. There are two things I'm always looking for here. What do people want? In other words, what do they aspire to? The big thing people want in my audience is to succeed at work, but they want to win at life.

To say it another way, they don't want to be successful at work at the expense of their most important relationships and their other priorities. I know that. That's the first psychographic piece of information I want. What is their aspiration? What do they want? It's amazing, if you ask people, what they'll tell you. They'll tell you what they want.

Secondly, what's getting in the way? What are the obstacles? What are the challenges? What is keeping them from getting what they want? With my audience, one of the biggest ones is people feel overwhelmed. They feel like they have too much to do. There's not enough time on their calendar to get it done. So I spend a lot of my time helping people deal with that.

**Michele:** So focusing on the readers would be... I love that this is the first step, because that really is the key to honing in on the purpose of your blog and what you're going to be writing about.

**Michael:** This is why comments are also so valuable. If you'll just pay attention to what people ask in the comments, particularly if you have a little bit of visibility and people are starting to write to you and ask questions, you could create a very effective, powerful blog if all you did was instead of replying to those email messages... I'm not saying you shouldn't do that, but instead of just answering that one person, you can bet that that person is a proxy for a big percentage of your audience that has a similar question.

So go ahead and turn that into a blog post. Here's the cool thing. If you get that question once and you get it twice and you get it three times, Dan Miller says that's a good indication to you that you need to write a blog post or maybe even create a product around that.

**Michele:** I was just going to say if you hear it that many times I think you need to create a product.

**Michael:** The fun thing is that once you've written that blog post... I do this all the time, because I have...I don't know...1,500 blog posts in my archive. When somebody asks that question, it's so easy for me to direct them back to a blog post where I offered up my best thinking on that topic.

**Michele:** I think this is such great advice. I've actually done this a number of times lately, where I get an email question, so I end up answering that email pretty in depth, but as I answer them I say, "This is going to become a blog post." I just cut and paste and turn it into a blog post. It's great.

**Michael:** Yeah, it's a great way to do it.

**Michele:** So the first step to creating a killer blog post is to focus on your readers. What is the second step?

**Michael:** *Write a powerful headline.* The reality is we live in an incredibly noisy world and if you don't give some thought and care to writing a headline that makes you stand out in a sea of noise, it's going to get ignored. I think one of the biggest problems people have in this area is they try to be too cute. They create one of those headlines that really is cute if you could just be there to explain it to them, but you're not going to be explaining it to them.

Either they subscribe to your blog in their email so they're looking at subject lines, and based on that subject line or the headline they decide to read it or not, or they're looking at your blog post in a RSS feed (Really Simple Syndication) using a blog reader like Feedly or Reeder or one of those, and they're just scanning down through the headlines.

It's very similar to books on a shelf that are spine out. If you go to any bookstore in the world, it's very few books that are what we call face out, where you can read the title, the subtitle, and see the cute picture. Ninety percent of them are spine out, where the only thing you can see is the headline. If you don't grab them in the headline, you lose. It's not going to get read. I spend a ton of time on headlines.

I want to give you a couple of resources. Probably one of the best (we'll have a link in the show notes to this) is *How to Write Magnetic Headlines*. It was created by Copyblogger, which is one of my go-to sources for better writing, particularly on the web. It goes through all of the different types of headlines and how to write compelling headlines.

Another book I've mentioned on this show many times, which sounds a little cheesy but has been enormously helpful to me, is a book by David Garfinkel called *Advertising Headlines That Make You Rich*. This is like a desk reference. That's how I look at it. I use it as that. He looked at the top direct-mail headlines of all time, the ones that sold the most products, that performed the best in the marketplace, and he uses those as templates and shows you how you can adapt them for a particular use.

He has about 20 of those in the book that are the best-performing headlines of all time. I have created so many based on that. Anyway, you have to get educated. I guess that's what I'm trying to say.

**Michele:** This is good news for people like me who really struggle to come up with the right kind of headline. A headline on a blog post is different than the title of a book. I mean, we have the same kind of attention span, as you mentioned, but people just fly through their potential list of reads so fast. When I look at my news app on my phone, there are very few news articles I click on for the same reason.

**Michael:** Yeah, exactly. One of the things that was interesting is I pulled a list of my most shared posts of all time. This is based on Facebook shares. I want you to catch the headlines. My number one of all time is called *Why Speaking Well of Your Spouse Is So Important*. It has 53,000 Facebook shares.

**Michele:** Really? Amazing.

**Michael:** I think the thing that works in that is that people probably haven't heard that before, but intuitively they know it has to be true, so they want to know why it's important. Here's another one. This is my second one. This won't surprise you: *5 Reasons Why You Should Take a Nap Every Day*.

**Michele:** That's actually one of my favorites.

**Michael:** Over 50,000 Facebook shares.

**Michele:** I would say the same thing is true there. People want to believe it's true. Hidden in there they desperately want to believe it's true, so they want to go read it to have confirmation of that.

**Michael:** It's interesting. This is another interesting one for me too. I think I need to get a clue here, because I don't write on marriage very often, but as you know, Gail and I have a great relationship and whenever I write on it it's a big deal. Here's one: *What Are You Doing to Protect Your Marriage?*

**Michele:** Oh, I like that. Hidden within that headline is kind of a risk of consequence. It has both of what to do in order to prevent, but even the word *protect* has that hint of something consequential, so we want to figure out what it is to avoid it.

**Michael:** It's a bit of a threat. Here's another one: *Why You Aren't Dead Yet.*

**Michele:** I really like that. I'm trying to remember if I read that one, but I love it. It's very catchy.

**Michael:** Honestly, it's one of my favorite posts I've ever written. It's a true story I had with somebody who in their 80s thought their best years were behind them. I was trying to convince this person, "You're alive for a reason. God is not done with you yet." This ended up being picked up by a church in North Carolina. They preached an entire sermon series based on this one post. Here's another one too. I love this one. I won't give you but a couple more, but here's one: *How a Small Shift in Your Vocabulary Can Instantly Change your Attitude.*

**Michele:** That's full of a promise. That's just filled with promise.

**Michael:** It is, and it also piques your curiosity. Or *12 Surprising Ways to Use Evernote You Might Not Have Considered.* Anyway, you get the idea.

**Michele:** That just makes me want to go click on it right now, because I want to know what I haven't considered.

**Michael:** Good. Mission accomplished.

**Michele:** All right. So far we've talked about the first two of seven steps. First, focus on your readers. Second, write a powerful headline. Michael did a great job of teasing us with some of his most popular headlines. It basically did the job of convincing me that it's important, so well done. What is that third step of writing a killer blog post?

**Michael:** *Include a relevant photo or image.* We live in such a visual world. I can share with you beyond a shadow of a doubt that if you use images in social media posts it will increase how that's being read and shared. It just draws us to it. Again, it's because we live in a world where people are scanning. An image is much more compelling than mere text.

First of all, you have to find a source for your photos. The one I use, but it's not cheap, is [istockphoto.com](http://istockphoto.com). I like it. It's owned by Getty, which is the largest source of photos in the world. You pay a licensing fee. What you can't afford to do as a blogger is just do a Google search and grab some photo you see on the web, because they will hunt you down and charge you some outrageous fee. Images are copyrighted just like content is, so you have to make sure you have the permission.

I'd rather pay a little bit and get an image from a reputable source so that I know it's licensed and I'm protecting and respecting the rights of the photographer who took that picture. I want to give you another source here. This is a blog post. We'll link to it in the show notes. It's called *The Busy Blogger's Guide to Creative, Compelling Images: My Top Five Resources for Blog Posts, Social Media, and More*. Some of these are free.

**Michele:** Oh nice. That's going to be in the show notes too, right?

**Michael:** It is. One of my favorites is one called Unsplash. It's an incredible resource. We use it a lot for quote cards, some of our ebook illustrations, and other products. It's a great search, but the images are free.

**Michele:** Oh nice. We like free. So include a relevant photo. I know from talking to you in the past, Michael, that for the whole blog writing process, you spend more time finding that photo than most people want to imagine.

**Michael:** Yeah, because it's so important. Again, all you have to do is look at even newspapers today. *USA Today* were the ones that first started doing these in color. It's important.

**Michele:** So include a relevant photo. What is the fourth step?

**Michael:** *Tell a relevant story.* I've talked about this on the podcast before and also in my blog about the anatomy of an effective blog post, where I talk about a template I use. I typically open a blog post with a story. You know this from being a public speaker and a writer yourself. Nothing arrests people's attention, and there are specific psychological and neurological reasons for this... Nothing is more engaging than a story.

I always start with a relevant story. Then I do a pivot to the principle I want to teach, and then I do what you and I would call from SCORRE the rationale. In this case, there are a couple of ways to get great stories. Sometimes when you hear a great speaker you think, "Wow! How could I be a storyteller like that?" Or you read a blog post (you're phenomenal at this) and think, "Where do I get great stories?"

One of the best things you can do is to mine your experience. Go on an excavation of your own life. I do this in Evernote, but sometimes I'll think of a story. Like I was talking to my sister last night and she reminded me that when she was 3 years old and I was 5 years old I broke her arm.

**Michele:** How could you, Michael? How could you do that? You're a wretched brother.

**Michael:** I know. I totally forgot the story. I made sort of a do-it-yourself seesaw. I had a sawhorse and put a one-by-six on it and I put her on one end and when I hit the bottom she went up in the air and fell down and broke her wrist.

**Michele:** You launched your sister?

**Michael:** I launched my sister. So I wrote that down. I said, "I don't know how I'm going to use that later, but I haven't had that memory in decades." Then I thought of quite possibly the first memory I ever had, which was when my parents brought her home. I was just 2, and they brought her home from the hospital.

I remember my mom sitting in the passenger seat of the car with my new baby sister and I crawled up to take a look at her. Again, I don't know how that would be used, you know, maybe that's an example of wonder or maybe it's an example of your first earliest memory. I don't know, but...

**Michele:** You're so right. Every day there are little things that happen that can become a source of content, like some kind of life lesson or some kind of insight or perspective. We kind of have to do what our friend Andy Andrews talks about and be a noticer, be someone who pays attention.

**Michael:** Yeah, we do, and we have to be willing to be vulnerable. Oftentimes the best stories, the ones that really connect and move the needle in terms of a killer blog post and more traffic and more shares and more engagement, are the ones where we reveal something we're scared to reveal because we think maybe people will think less of us.

For example, when I've written on my business failure that I went through in 1991 or I talk about... I remember one time I talked about... I think it was like seven lessons I learned from a fight with my wife.

**Michele:** I remember that, and I liked it. I wanted to know that as adorable as you and Gail are it's not always perfect.

**Michael:** It's not always perfect. When I can reveal that and be vulnerable, something that's difficult to share, that can be powerful. Then I try to distill a principle from that story. This is my own worldview and I know it's yours too, but I don't think things just randomly happen to us. I think they happen for a reason. They happen to us for the benefit that we can derive out of it and from the growth we can experience, but I also believe the things that happen to us, both good and bad, are given to us as a stewardship for the sake of others.

I know with you, going through all your cancer experience, that's something that has absolutely become the leverage point for your ministry and for your influence and for your impact on other people. Jon Acuff, oftentimes, when something bad happens says, "This too shall post."

**Michele:** So true. It's one of my favorite quotes ever.

**Michael:** So whenever I go through something really bad or something embarrassing I get a little bit of satisfaction, a little bit of redemption from saying, "Well, this sucked, but I have a great blog post already in my mind that I'm going to use this in."

**Michele:** Totally. And the more embarrassing it is the more powerful it is at times. Just as a sidenote, a lot of what I write about has to do with extreme stories, extreme circumstances, but just as a caution to everybody, it doesn't have to be a tragedy or a massive drama to create a relevant story.

A lot of the stories I use seem to be small, random, maybe 60-second interactions that become a source of a relevant story and a powerful concept I'm communicating on the blog. So it doesn't have to be some big drama in order to be a relevant story. You just have to pay attention to your own life.

**Michael:** Absolutely. It's all there. There is so much material in your own life. If you listen to great comedians like Jerry Seinfeld or Brian Regan, people I love to listen to, they are just telling stories one after another on themselves or just the stupid things they observe.

**Michele:** Oh, absolutely. Jim Gaffigan does it just about normal life with a wife and kids. He has stories coming out of his ears just about normal everyday life. It's so much fun. It's more about learning to pay attention and then cataloging them, which you and I both use Evernote to do that.

Well, so far we've talked about the first four of seven steps to creating a killer blog post: focus on your readers, write a powerful headline, include the relevant photo, and tell a relevant story. Before we continue our discussion on this, Michael, there is a special event happening soon that you'd like to talk about and it features another one of your favorite subjects: productivity. Tell us about it.

**Michael:** I'm so excited about this because I've been doing the interviews. We are hosting something we're calling the Free to Focus Productivity Summit. What I did was I went to the people I've learned from and that I want to learn from at even a greater depth and interviewed them about their best strategies, hacks, tips, and just view of productivity.

My own feeling is that there is a new kind of productivity that is blossoming in the world and it's not just about doing more or doing it faster. It's about creating a life you'll love, creating the life you were meant to live, so that you're productive for the sake of creating the space for that life, not just so you can become more of a robot and more of a workaholic. Nobody wants that.

In the productivity summit I interview a panel of thought leaders like Cal Newport, who's the author of *Deep Work*, a profound book that has really had a big influence on me; Greg McKeown, whom you and I have interviewed, author of *Essentialism*; Gretchen Rubin, *The Happiness Project*; Sean Covey, and a bunch of others. It's, again, just reshaping the way we think about intentional living and working.

**Michele:** These are all people, by the way... It's almost like you handpicked them for me. I would love to sit down and learn from them. So tell me how to sign up. Tell me how to go about attending it, and then give me the bad news. How expensive is it?

**Michael:** Okay. I'll save the expensive part for last. You can find out more at [freetofocus.com/summit](https://freetofocus.com/summit). Sign-up is free. It doesn't cost you anything to watch them. We're using it as a way of creating exposure for a course I'm going to be introducing later called the

*Free to Focus* course, but there's no obligation. You're not going to get pitched at the summit. We're simply going to be raising awareness and hopefully encouraging you on the topic of productivity. It's completely free. Again, [freetofocus.com/summit](https://freetofocus.com/summit). It's going to be September 1-9. This does go away at the end of that period and you do have to register, but that's it.

**Michele:** So I can register online at [freetofocus.com/summit](https://freetofocus.com/summit). It's September 1-9. It's absolutely free, zero cost involved, and all I have to do is go online and sign up from home. I can sit in my pajamas on my couch and watch this, right?

**Michael:** That's right. No travel expense. No hassling through airports. By the way, have you been traveling the last couple of weeks?

**Michele:** No, I haven't. Well, I was traveling right when Southwest had their big huge meltdowns, but I'm really glad I've been home for the last couple of weeks. The good news, for those who want to learn from all of these experts, including you as well, this is something you can do from home for absolutely free and all you have to do is sign up. So once again, make sure you head to [freetofocus.com/summit](https://freetofocus.com/summit).

Now let's dive back into our content for today, which is all about how to write a killer blog post. This is Michael's seven-step system to quickly create the kind of blog post that will gain you traffic, engagement, and shares. We've talked about the first four steps, but without delay let's dive into the fifth step.

**Michael:** *Make your post scannable.* People are very busy. If your content looks so dense that it's just a huge block of text, people are probably not going to take time to read it because it looks like too much work. This is where you can use some things like subheads to break up the text. Hugely important.

Or bullets or enumerated items or even images throughout the text. That's not something I do, but a lot of writers do that very successfully. Break up the text and make it seem consumable so people have a sense of progress as they move from one subhead to the next subhead or read through a list of items or a list of bullets.

**Michele:** Absolutely. It's amazing how simply keeping your paragraphs very, very short... I sometimes recreate dialogue if I'm telling a story, and that breaks it up. It makes it easier for people to read.

**Michael:** I want to pick up on something you just said there, Michele, because keeping your paragraphs short is really important. This is like the easiest fix you can make to your blog. I see

this all the time. People write these really long paragraphs. It's not as bad as the German philosophers, when I was a philosophy major and would read some of these guys who would have paragraphs that would go on for pages, but it still is discouraging. I believe in this: use short paragraphs, short sentences (avoid complex sentences when you can), and use simple words.

**Michele:** I love that. Short paragraphs, short sentences, and simple words. Easy to remember. What is the sixth step?

**Michael:** *Keep your posts brief.*

**Michele:** Which is a really good follow-up to what we just talked about, making them scannable. Same idea.

**Michael:** Yeah, same idea. I would suggest about 500 words per post. I want to caution people that your posts can be too short. If they're shorter than about 300 words, Google won't assign something they call *authority* to it because it doesn't look substantial enough to be authoritative. Authoritative is important for your ranking in Google, so I would say 500 or so. Yours seem to be much longer than that.

**Michele:** Mine are about 750, but I do a lot of narrative, so I can get away with a little bit longer because of that, but I'm working to cut that back.

**Michael:** Okay, get this. *Social Media Examiner* or Tim Ferriss typically write blog posts that are 1,000 to 2,000 words long, but those are authoritative. Those tend to be things like "The Complete Guide to Blog Images," for example. I'm making that up, but something that purports to be authoritative and comprehensive. Those can really work. If you're going to only write one blog post a week, that would be a legitimate content strategy.

For most of the rest of us, I think keeping it brief is important, because we don't want to create a rock that's so big we can't push it. You know what I'm saying? Like we say, "Oh my gosh. This is turning into a master's dissertation just to get this blog post out." I can bang out 500 words pretty much in an hour, maybe 70 minutes, but if it gets much longer than that it's going to take a lot more research and a lot more time.

You *will* get better the more you write. I want to encourage people. You *will* get better. I don't think about my writing so much anymore. I just write. But you know how self-conscious or self-aware you are at the beginning. It slows you down like crazy. You'll get over that if you just practice.

**Michele:** So you're telling me that over time, if I keep up this blogging thing, I'll get less self-conscious? That's what you mean?

**Michael:** Yeah.

**Michele:** So I'm eight years and counting. Good to know.

**Michael:** You're halfway there.

**Michele:** I'm halfway there. What's the final step to quickly creating a killer blog post?

**Michael:** This one is an easy one. I'm not sure it works quite as well as it used to, but I like to end every blog post with a question, and here's why: I want to have a conversation. I have the privilege as the blogger of my blog of going first, so I get to kind of frame up the conversation, introduce the topic, but I don't expect that I'm the last word on that topic and I believe that my readers are going to have a ton of stuff to contribute.

I was talking earlier about that one on the 10 apps I install first on any device. Well, what's cool about a post like that is all my readers start throwing in all the apps *they* like, and I'm going, "Whoa! That's a great discovery. Hadn't heard of that one." It really does become a dialogue and a conversation. If you're not getting comments, one of the reasons maybe is because you're not inviting them.

**Michele:** So true. It's interesting. I always ask a question. I have found, like you, that it's not quite as effective as it used to be, but I have found that asking a question at the end of the blog post some people will leave comments. I have pretty good engagement on my site as far as the comments, but some people even if they don't feel comfortable posting a public comment will reply or send me an email with insights that maybe are more personal, and I learn as much from that as I do with the public comments.

**Michael:** That's good.

**Michele:** Just having that open door. Letting people know that you're trying to be somewhat accessible as much as you're able to.

**Michael:** Yeah, I think it's also just respectful. What it has to be, though, is an open-ended question. It can't be just a yes or no question. "Have you ever felt like this? Yes or no?" That's not a conversation.

**Michele:** No, it's not.

**Michael:** That's rhetorical, but that's not a conversation.

**Michele:** Absolutely. I even like asking questions that might encourage disagreement or asking, "Have you had a different experience?" just for the sake of learning and growth. I think it's great.

**Michael:** I agree.

**Michele:** So today Michael has given us his seven-step system to quickly create a killer blog post. First, focus on your readers. Second, write a powerful headline. Third, include a relevant photo. Fourth, tell a relevant story. Fifth, make your post scannable. Sixth, keep your post brief. Seventh, end with a question.

If you enjoyed today's episode, you can get the show notes and a full transcript at [michaelhyatt.com](http://michaelhyatt.com). Do us a favor before you go. I promise it will only take a very short time, but please head to iTunes and rate this podcast. This is huge for us in terms of improving our ranking and keeping the show visible so other people can discover it. So thank you ahead of time for helping us out. Do you have any final thoughts on this subject today, Michael?

**Michael:** I think that anybody can get better at blogging if they'll just become a student of what works. It kind of goes back to those first three metrics for a killer blog post. We live in a world where we get near instant feedback on our writing. I remember when I first started out in the book publishing world...oh my gosh.

You'd spend years, maybe, writing a manuscript. You'd send it to a publisher. You wouldn't hear for months whether it was accepted. They would put it out in the marketplace. It would be several other months before you had any sense of whether it had traction and what readers thought.

Today with blogging you can put a blog post up this morning and by noon you have a pretty good sense of whether it's working. If you'll start noticing that, what works and what doesn't work, and start building a strategy based on that, you will get better and build an audience. It's that simple.

**Michele:** Absolutely. Such great advice. Thank you, Michael. Thank you, listeners, for joining us today. We always enjoy hanging out with you. Until next time, remember: your life, your one and only life, is a gift. Now go make it count.