



This Is Your Life Podcast

Season 3, Episode 8

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Michael Hyatt

Michele Cushatt: Welcome to *This Is Your Life* with Michael Hyatt, where our goal is to give you the clarity, courage, and commitment you need to do what matters. My name is Michele Cushatt. I'm your cohost today, and I'm sitting in the studio with Michael Hyatt. Hey there, Michael!

Michael Hyatt: Hi, Michele!

Michele: Most message deliverers, platform builders, know that an active blog with premium content is the best way to expand your reach, to get your message out there quickly and to as many people as possible, right?

Michael: That's right.

Michele: But developing a consistent blogging habit (not to mention high quality content) is not easy. Agree?

Michael: And it feels incredibly time-consuming.

Michele: Yes. It is.

Michael: If you don't have a lot of practice or a lot of experience, it's going to take longer, but more importantly, if you don't have a strategy or workflow, it's going to take longer. So what I want to do is reveal my top-secret strategy.

Michele: Michael Hyatt's top-secret strategy!

Michael: My workflow... But seriously, I'm not productive by accident. I'm productive on purpose.

Michele: Well, you've been doing it for a long time.

Michael: I've been doing it for a long time.

Michele: So you've really kind of fine-tuned the process, and you want to give us a sneak peek at that so that way we can hopefully avoid years of struggle and kind of fast-forward to where it's easier to generate that kind of content.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: So today we're going to show you *how you can craft a blog post in 70 minutes or less*. That doesn't even seem reasonable to me.

Michael: Really? For you? You're an experienced writer.

Michele: Well... But I'm a perfectionist, and I want to get it just right, and I really love words, so I end up going over a blog post like 30 times, trying to get every word just right.

Michael: Yeah. I know that's easy to do. I will say this. You're a better writer than I am. You're very much a wordsmith, and you pick every word, and just the turn of phrase and all of that is fantastic.

Michele: Well, thank you. I'm not sure that's true, but thank you very much.

Michael: No, it's true, but I do think you get faster as you have more experience.

Michele: True.

Michael: And I think that at some point at least guys like me who are trying to build a platform just say, "This isn't perfect, but it's good enough." The point of absolute perfection never comes. I think a blog post that's published but isn't perfect is a lot more effective than a blog post that's never published.

Michele: Yeah, you can say that again. That's like profound and not profound, but it's true.

Michael: Yeah, it's obvious, but...

Michele: You're absolutely right.

Michael: Yeah, so just get it out there. I learned this from Seth Godin. I think that the more you can ship and just get it out there and go on to the next one... Don't try to get it perfect. I've watched Gail do this with her art. She has become quite a painter.

Michele: Oh, she has. I mean, she has beautiful work.

Michael: Well, she's doing great, but I've noticed that even though she may have the perfectionistic tendency too (I think every artist does), she's willing to finish that painting and move on to the next one. In the next one she'll learn something else, and she'll become something better, but it's the body of our work that people are going to judge ultimately and not that one post. Maybe it's not as good as it could be, but it's good enough, and by the way, I'm tired of it and ready to get on to something else.

Michele: Yes. Yes. I have found... There have been times when I've pulled the trigger on a post that I just didn't feel was perfect enough, and then it has gone crazy and ended up being my most popular one. I don't even know how that happened.

Michael: Okay, this honestly is the dirty little secret of blogging. There have been times when I've just labored and researched and honed and fine-tuned a blog post, put it up, thinking to myself, "This is perfect. It's going to go crazy..."

Michele: "This is it!"

Michael: "This is it! This is the breakthrough I've been looking for!" And then it's crickets.

Michele: It's like total crickets. I just had one of those not too long ago.

Michael: Nobody gets it.

Michele: I was like, "What happened?"

Michael: And then you get the experience (I've had this experience too) where it's late at night. You're committed to being consistent, and you want to get this blog post out tomorrow, but it's late at night. You have half of your brain tied behind your back, and you put a blog post together, post it out there, and go, "I'm embarrassed to do this." And then it goes crazy.

Michele: Uh-huh. It happens almost every single time. When I have that feeling of embarrassment... In fact, here's my secret. I wake up at 4:00 in the morning, half tempted to run downstairs and delete it before it gets sent out.

Michael: Oh yeah.

Michele: I always have it sent out like right between 4:00 and 5:00 a.m.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: I can't tell you how many times I've had my eyes wide open and popped out of bed at 4:00 a.m., going, "I have to go delete it! It's terrible!"

Michael: "I can't publish this!"

Michele: Then I leave it up for some reason, and it ends up being one of my most popular posts.

Michael: Yeah. Yep. But it works best when we have a process, and that's what we're going to talk about today.

Michele: Yes. Exactly.

Michael: When we have a process and a defined workflow, it can make all the difference.

Michele: Our goal today is to give you this process, but we want to take the stress out of blogging for you, because it can be very stressful. And when we get stressed about it, we actually end up procrastinating or putting it off, and then that blog post never happens or we're not consistent.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: We want to take the stress out so that way you can develop that consistent blogging habit. Today we're going to give you several steps in order to make that happen. Before we start, I want you to just give us a very, very quick review or timeline of your transition as a blogger from where you started to where you are now.

Michael: In terms of how long it took me?

Michele: Yeah, as far as your process, because I'm sure you didn't start out doing this.

Michael: Oh, okay.

Michele: So kind of give us an idea of what it was like when you first started blogging.

Michael: Yeah...

Michele: As you laugh.

Michael: I'm laughing because this was 2004.

Michele: Did they have the Internet back then? Oh wait...

Michael: Aww. That hurt.

Michele: You've been blogging for a long time!

Michael: Well, I have. I wasn't the first. I mean, blogging was around for a long time before that.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: The truth is I was kind of blogging before that, but it was more of a static website where I changed the content frequently. It wasn't really blogging software.

Michele: I remember those days, yes.

Michael: That was back in the Neanderthal era. But I broke my ankle, and I was home in bed for a week after a surgery I'd had, and I thought, "Well, now is a good time to start a blog. I've wanted to do this."

Michele: You couldn't go anywhere anyway, so you might as well have.

Michael: I couldn't go anywhere anyway, so I set up a blog on Typepad. Here's what my process looked like. Do you remember *blog*? I don't know if you remember this, but back in the olden days, that was basically a cobbled-together word.

Michele: Mm-hmm, a weblog.

Michael: Yeah, a weblog. It was kind of like a personal journal, and that's how it was described, so I didn't have any plan. I just kind of blogged on what I noticed, and I would write a couple of paragraphs. I mean, it's embarrassing to go back... By the way, this is all still live on michaelhyatt.com. You can find all of this old junk.

Michele: Do you know what you've just done? There are now thousands of people who are going to look for all of your horrible writing from the early days.

Michael: Well, if they do, it'll be an encouragement to them.

Michele: Good! I mean, you see the process!

Michael: Yeah. In a way, it's like looking at those pictures drawn by five-year-olds, the stick figures and all of that. That's how my writing was. It was kind of the equivalent of that. But I didn't have a defined process. In those days I waited for the inspiration to blog, so sometimes that meant I blogged three times in one week, and sometimes it meant I went three weeks before another blog post.

Because the inspiration didn't show up that much, and it didn't show up with any frequency. I've learned to get around that now. I don't wait for inspiration. I find that when I sit down ready to go, the inspiration is more likely to show up than when I do the reverse.

Michele: True. True. Sometimes it doesn't show up until the last sentence or two, and then I go back and fix it, but yeah.

Michael: Yeah. Or even in the editing.

Michele: Yeah. But you have to just kind of show up and do it. All right, so you've obviously made a huge transition from the beginning until now. That's what we're going to deliver to you listeners today so that way, hopefully, we can help you kind of short circuit that process so you don't have to spend 10 years agonizing over this.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: You can kind of get a jumpstart on how to be able to write a blog post in 70 minutes or less. Let's walk through these steps. We have several of them. What's the very first step?

Michael: Well, the very first step is to *start the night before you're going to write*. Actually, I now do this weeks before, but I want to create that seed idea, and I want to plant that in my brain so my subconscious can be at work on it in my downtime. So in the old days I would literally do a blog the night before or the day of, and if had I planted the idea in my mind, my subconscious would work on it overnight.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: So that was hugely helpful. Now what I do is that when I have an idea (we'll talk about this more in a little bit), I just rough it out, whatever it is, in Evernote. I tag that post "Ideas." That's one tag I use. I just kind of put it in the Crock-Pot of my mind, so to speak, and just let it simmer in the background of my thinking.

Michele: Which is so effective. In fact, a lot of writers use this technique. It's similar but a little different. Let's say they're writing a book and they finish a chapter. Rather than finish their day's writing at the end of the chapter, they'll start writing the first few lines of the next chapter.

Michael: Yeah, they prime the pump.

Michele: Because it actually helps them jumpstart right into it so much faster. I've found that helps me so much. Otherwise I end up just being stumped, looking at the blank page, on what to do.

Michael: That's right. Our subconscious minds are a huge resource, and our minds can be working in the background while we're doing other things in the foreground. Planting the idea in your brain is good.

Michele: Okay. Start the night before. This doesn't take hours. I mean, just sit down. Jot down some ideas just to get it started just for a few minutes. Then what would be the next step?

Michael: Well, let me just say something about that first one. Even if you do nothing else other than identify the topic and kind of what the angle is going to be...

Michele: That's enough. Got it.

Michael: In the SCORRE system, it's not even an objective statement.

Michele: Just ideas.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: Just more brainstorming.

Michael: That's right. Yep.

Michele: Okay, so start the night before. Just get some potential ideas brainstormed and down. What's next?

Michael: The second one is to *use your downtime to think*. Think about when you get your best ideas. It's probably not when you sit down and are actively thinking. It's during times like when you're in the shower, when you're out for a run, when you're on your commute. For me, it's when I'm out golfing. It's when I'm doing something but I'm not doing much.

Michele: Uh-huh.

Michael: Now the people who study creativity, scientists who study that, say it most often happens when we're relaxed. That's why it happens in the shower and other places, so use that downtime to think, and be purposeful about it. For example (you know this), I listen to audiobooks when I run, and typically what happens is that about halfway through my run, I turn off the audiobook because it has stimulated some thinking in my mind.

I want to use the second half of my run to just think about that, to explore it, to develop it a little bit more. Sometimes I'll even come up with a complete (actually, I would say oftentimes I do this) outline in my brain. The first thing I do when I get back from my run is write it down so I don't lose it.

Michele: I do exactly the same thing.

Michael: You do?

Michele: Except rather than audiobooks, I listen to podcasts when I run.

Michael: Okay.

Michele: Almost always, I have to shut them off in the last 10 minutes of my run because so many ideas are going that I just need the empty space to kind of process them through, and I almost always have my entire outline done by the time I get back. I've found, though, that if I shower first, I lose it, so I literally have to come back into the house and write it down right away.

Michael: Yeah. And sometimes I'll dictate that into Evernote. Sometimes I've been known to stop. Maybe I had the phrasing of something like I wanted it and I didn't want to lose that, so I'd stop my run and dictate that into Evernote so I captured it, because I'm the same way. I'll have 100 ideas out there and forget them before I get back.

Michele: Can I just add that every year it's harder and harder to retain the ideas I get?

Michael: Yeah, ditto that.

Michele: Okay. So start the night before and use your downtime to think. What is the third step?

Michael: Okay, so now let's say it's time to write. You've pulled up a chair. You want to *go offline*. The thing that kills writing and turns a 70-minute process into a 7-hour process is when you're allowing yourself to be bombarded by social media and other kinds of interruptions.

Michele: Yes. So true. I make this mistake all the time.

Michael: Oh...

Michele: I stop to look at an email, or I go... Then it just hijacks the whole process.

Michael: It does. There are couple of different ways you can do it. There's software out there that'll do it, that'll basically make it impossible for you to access parts of the Internet.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: I still need to access the Internet because I have to do research.

Michele: True.

Michael: But I don't need to access Twitter, Facebook, or things that will rob me of my time and distract me.

Michele: Or email.

Michael: Or my phone. So if you have an iPhone (I don't know how it works on Androids), you can put your phone on "Do Not Disturb" mode.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: A lot of people don't know this, and I'd show you this if you were on my side of the computer screen, but you can click on the notification button, holding down the option key (again, on a Mac), and it will turn notifications off.

Michele: Really? Okay.

Michael: So you're hearing nothing. And then obviously turn off notifications on your email program. There's no good reason to have those on unless you're in customer support or working a 9-1-1 service or something. But get yourself into a distraction-free environment.

Michele: You can use different tools as well. I use Scrivener to write blog posts at times, and that kind of blacks out the whole screen except for the writing.

Michael: Yeah, full screen mode.

Michele: Evernote has something similar as well.

Michael: Yeah, I don't use that in Evernote. I don't actually write in Evernote, but I save my ideas there.

Michele: Yeah, I don't use it either. I use Scrivener more, but something about blacking out that screen whenever I'm doing any kind of intense writing really helps me.

Michael: Yeah, and I find too that if I just unload everything on my computer except what I really need to write... For me that's going to be a browser, Scrivener, and Evernote. If I have those three tools loaded, I don't need anything else.

Michele: All right, so those steps in order to write that blog post in 70 minutes a day or less are to, first, start the night before, second, use downtime to think, and third, go offline. What would you do next?

Michael: This is kind of my secret sauce, but this gets me into the creative space faster than anything else I could suggest. That is to *turn on some music*, but it has to be the right kind of music.

Michele: True.

Michael: For me, vocal music doesn't work. If there are lyrics, I'm going to get sidetracked and distracted.

Michele: I do exactly the same. Yep.

Michael: So it has to be instrumental music for me, and for me it works best if it's soundtrack music, so I love to listen to Thomas Newman or Hans Zimmer or somebody like that. I have a playlist in Spotify that I'll share in the show notes because people ask me for this all the time when I share this in a public venue. It's whatever music moves you.

Michele: Mm-hmm.

Michael: It's what gets you in touch with your emotion and enables you to faster get to that place where you can begin creating. Music is a great trigger for me, and I use it every time I write.

Michele: You know, I do the same. There are certain types of music that actually fit different kinds of writing for me. I know it sounds silly, but...

Michael: Oh, really? Okay.

Michele: I actually like flute, like kind of the Native American flute music.

Michael: Oh yeah! I like that too.

Michele: I listen to it when I write certain types of things. Then there's classical music I listen to a lot...again, just as long as there are no lyrics or anything.

Michael: Yep.

Michele: No opera or anything like that, but yeah, I use different types depending on what kind of writing I'm going to do.

Michael: Cool.

Michele: All right, well, we're going to take a break, but stick with us. We'll be right back with many more steps in how to write a blog post in 70 minutes or less.

Michael: As a busy and successful blogger, podcaster, author, speaker, and consultant, I'm constantly asked about the tools I use to get it all done. Now for the first time, I'm going to pull back the curtain and let you peek inside my toolbox to see the software and hardware I use for everything from blogging and podcasting to productivity, social media, and speaking, plus so much more. You can't buy Inside My Toolbox, but you can get it for free by subscribing to my free email newsletter.

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Michele: All right, so after you get your music set, after you kind of have your beginning ideas ready to go, then what do you do?

Michael: *I set a timer to 70 minutes.*

Michele: Do you really?

Michael: Yeah. For me, there's something about racing against the clock (maybe it's because I'm competitive, or maybe it's because Achiever is my first strength according to the StrengthsFinder test) because it makes me really focus unlike anything else.

Michele: Do you really do this every time?

Michael: Yeah, I literally do it. Yeah. I use the same timer application that I'm using right now, which I just downloaded from the app store several years ago.

Michele: Timer Utility.

Michael: So I'm just timing it. Watching that countdown keeps me focused. I'm less likely to get distracted if I know my time is going by. The truth is that's kind of life.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: So if we're getting distracted, we're wasting time. We just don't know about it. But by setting a timer, you can stay focused.

Michele: All right, so set a timer for that 70 minutes. Okay, what do you do next? What's the next step?

Michael: Okay, my next one (this is hugely helpful) is to use a template.

Michele: Okay. What is this template?

Michael: Okay, when I say a template, I mean I have a certain skeletal structure or anatomy of what I'm going to use, if you will, for my blog posts. I'm not having to create that from scratch every time or having to guess what the flow of the blog post is going to be. It looks like this. I start off with a compelling headline.

By the way, I'm going to loop back around and tweak this after I write the blog post, but I at least start out with a headline that in some ways foreshadows the content that's going to come or has a hook or promise or something in it. There's a whole science to that. But I start with the headline. Then the next element is going to be a lead paragraph.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: That's where I want to grab people by the shirt and say, "Listen to this because it's relevant!" If you don't grab them with the headline and the lead paragraph, you're probably not going to pull them into the blog post. They're not going to read it.

Then from there I'll go to a personal anecdote, some kind of story that comes out of my own life. Again, this is just my template. Then I'll have what I call the pivot, where I'll pivot out of that story and into the life principle, life application, or (as we would say in SCORRE language) the objective statement.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: Then I go into the rationale. These are my points, my bulleted points or enumerated points. I'm going to walk through those. Then I'm going to summarize it all with some poignant conclusion that brings it all home, and then I'm going to leave the blog post with a question. So those are the elements of my blog template.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: As you can tell, I have it pretty much memorized.

Michele: Uh-huh. You've done it a few times.

Michael: And in Scrivener, I literally have a template, so I always pick that template.

Michele: So you can just plug it in.

Michael: And just start with the template.

Michele: Well, that gives you a place to start so you don't have that blank screen.

Michael: That's right. At that point it's almost like decorating a Christmas tree. You have the tree up. Now you just have to hang the ornaments.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: That's how the template is.

Michele: Which makes it so much easier once you have that. Now you briefly mentioned SCORRE in this, and just for those who aren't familiar with SCORRE, SCORRE is a process we teach at the SCORRE Conference. You can find more information about that at scoreconference.tv, but basically it walks through the steps of putting your content together.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: So you mentioned that objective and the rationale, but it really helps to give you that kind of backbone to your content.

Michael: That's exactly right.

Michele: Okay, so after you use that template, then what do you do?

Michael: Then I'm going to *write without editing*.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: Okay? Because when you're writing, that is more or less a right-brain activity. When you're editing, that's more or less a left-brain activity. Those are two different hemispheres in your brain, and you need to be as single-minded as you can about the process. So people get really stuck and it really slows them down if they're editing as they go.

Michele: This has been one of my biggest flaws with writing. I keep going back over one sentence and trying to fix it and make it better.

Michael: It's common. Yeah, and it's because you're going back and forth between these different hemispheres in your brain, and it can be very unproductive. So I just try to do almost a brain dump, just write without interruption as fast as I can and just try to get it all out. Then I go back and refine. Then I go back and edit. But that first step is just to write without editing. I'm generally writing toward a word count. Not exactly, but...

Michele: What word count do you shoot for?

Michael: Well, I want to get around 700 words.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: Anywhere from 500-1,000 words is acceptable. Sometimes I've done 1,200. I've even done some blog posts that were 2,000 words.

Michele: Really?

Michael: People say, "Well, isn't that too long?" You can never answer that question in the abstract.

Michele: It depends on what you're writing and who your audience is, I would imagine.

Michael: It depends. It needs to be short enough to be interesting or remain interesting but long enough to cover the subject.

Michele: Mm-hmm. Very true. Okay, so write without editing. Just do your dump. How much time do you think it takes for you just to kind of throw it all up on your screen? I think I just said you throw up on your screen, but you know what I meant.

Michael: Well, it's a similar process. Um, that may be 30 minutes of the process.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: I mean, it just depends. If I'm going in with an outline in mind already, I've programmed my subconscious, and I'm in the groove and all that, it can be faster, but it doesn't take long for that to happen.

Michele: Okay, so then once you write without editing and get to the end of that, I assume that is when you start the editing process. Is that correct?

Michael: That's right. Now I'm going to *edit and format it*. I'm first going to go back through and edit it. By the way, this is an iterative process, so I'm doing it several times, reading it back through. Then typically at this point I'm copying and pasting it from Scrivener over to WordPress. When I'm in WordPress, I'm going to write the MultiMarkdown in WordPress and it can translate that into HTML. But I'm typically doing any linking and that kind of stuff in WordPress, not Scrivener.

Michele: All right.

Michael: But this is where I'm editing. A couple of things I do when I'm editing... I look to eliminate redundancy, so I'm trying to get it tighter. I'm trying to eliminate complex sentences and make them

simpler and more straightforward. I'm trying to use easy words instead of complicated words. "Is there an easier or simpler way to say that or a simpler word to use?" I'm just really tightening it up.

Michele: I would imagine you go back to that first paragraph too and just make sure that's as punchy as possible and as grabbing as possible.

Michael: Yeah, absolutely. Sometimes by the time you get to the end of the post, all of a sudden you know what the post is really about. It may have taken a different turn, and now it requires going back and rewriting the first paragraph.

Michele: True. In fact, I would say that almost every time (if not every single time) my headline and my first paragraph change once I get to the end.

Michael: Yeah, that's right. It's very common.

Michele: Almost always. Okay, so after you edit and format, what do you do?

Michael: Well, this is when I *add the graphics, links, and metadata*. I always like to put an image with it. People are very visual, and the more you can use images in your blog posts, the more you're going to pull them in. That's why newspapers use images. This can take some time.

Michele: It does.

Michael: Sometimes you can get stuck on this, and this can totally blow out the rest of your time. I use iStockphoto.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: A lot of people don't like to use that, because it's too expensive, and there may be another mechanism, another resource. This isn't really the show for that.

Michele: I use 123RF.com.

Michael: I haven't even heard of that one.

Michele: That's what I use for my photos.

Michael: Are those free?

Michele: No. I pay for them.

Michael: You pay for them?

Michele: But they're not quite as expensive as iStockphoto.com.

Michael: Yeah. Yeah.

Michele: But it's the same kind of thing. I mean, there are so many different possibilities out there.

Michael: There are.

Michele: So find what works for you.

Michael: I try to find a photo I can use, and I really try to stay away (sometimes I'm not as good at this as I am other times) from clichéd photos. The best way I can demonstrate that as I'm talking about this just to say a clichéd photo would be like the classic handshake photo.

Michele: Yes. Yes, of course.

Michael: Or the drop of water in a pond with the ripple effect.

Michele: Yes.

Michael: These are so overused.

Michele: They're overused. Yeah. Exactly. There are certain photos you just see over and over again. There may be variations, but it's the same kind of clichéd image.

Michael: In a perfect world (I'd really like to move toward this), I'd like to take all of my own photos.

Michele: Mm-hmm. I would too. I'm just not a good photographer.

Michael: Well, I'm a pretty good photographer, but... What's her name, The Pioneer Woman?

Michele: Ree Drummond.

Michael: Ree Drummond. She takes her own photography.

Michele: We love Ree in my house because she's responsible for most of the meals.

Michael: Most of the food? I mean, she does a tremendous job.

Michele: She's great.

Michael: That kind of photography would have the most credibility, but I don't worry about that. So find a photo that's appropriate and then put it in your links, put it in your metadata. That's really important.

Michele: For the person who doesn't know what that is, explain.

Michael: This is the data about the post, so it would include things like what category on your blog is this going to go under.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: Google assumes that if you don't know, it doesn't know. Are there any tags you want to add to it?

Michele: Okay.

Michael: I use a WordPress add-in that makes it SEO-friendly (search engine optimization-friendly). I'm going to enter things like a description about what the blog post is about, so after I get that blog post written, I'm going to come up with about a 160-character description of what that blog post is about. That's what Google wants to index it correctly.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: So I use a plug-in called All in One SEO.

Michele: Yep. I've used the same.

Michael: Okay.

Michele: All right, let's recap really quickly before we go on to that final step. You want to start the night before; use downtime to think; go offline; turn on some music; set a timer; use a template; write without editing; edit and format; add graphics, links, and metadata; and... What is the tenth one?

Michael: The tenth one is to *not publish the post but publish a draft of the post*.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: What I do is publish a draft or preview the draft, and then I want to read back through it. I don't know why this is the case, but when you're seeing all of the elements put together on your blog, looking as close to the final product as it will when you publish it, there's just something about it. There are things you pick up that you wouldn't pick up otherwise. I do that draft, and then I proof it in draft form.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: Sometimes I might let some of my colleagues preview the draft as well because they'll see things I don't see. I'm horrible about seeing typos.

Michele: Oh, I am too.

Michael: Most people are.

Michele: I can read it 100 times and still miss...

Michael: Yeah. You can still miss the most common ones. People will point those out for me, but...

Michele: Oh, they're always very helpful to point that out.

Michael: Yeah. But it helps to read it in its native environment on your blog.

Michele: It is helpful.

Michael: So I do the draft, and then I'm done. Then I schedule it for publication and I'm out of there.

Michele: In 70 minutes or less.

Michael: Seventy minutes or less.

Michele: Okay, that's impressive. I like that. Now you briefly mentioned post length. We talked about that really quickly when we were talking about writing without editing. Do you have any other rules you abide by when writing the main content, like do you use short paragraphs?

Michael: Yes! Thank you for asking.

Michele: Do you make sure you always use bullets? All of that kind of stuff...

Michael: Yeah, I really believe that the more scannable you can make your copy or content, the more likely it is to get read and get finished.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: So I try to use short paragraphs, like two to three sentences. I make it scannable through using subheadings, bulleted lists, enumerated lists... Anything that can break up the copy and not make it look dense will be hugely helpful to getting it read.

Michele: Well, then it's like bite-sized.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: People can digest it in bite-sized pieces. I've also noticed you use a lot of internal links throughout your posts.

Michael: Yes.

Michele: Why is that?

Michael: Because I want to keep people on my site.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: I also don't want to have to recap everything I said in a previous post, so if I can just link to it, it gives something for somebody else to visit and also keeps me from having to regurgitate the same thing over and over again.

Michele: And you're also providing just additional resources for your reader.

Michael: Right.

Michele: You're giving them as much as they could possibly need. You're almost anticipating that they might have a question about what you just wrote in that sentence, and you give them a link right there to answer it.

Michael: That's right.

Michele: That's so helpful. Now does this process apply to all blog audiences, or are there any differences for certain audiences? For example, let's say somebody is writing for academia or certain online magazines that require longer online posts. Do you change those rules at all as far as this process or not?

Michael: Well, I don't have any experience with that, because I write what I write, but I would say this. I think the important thing is that if you can define a process or a workflow for yourself, no matter what that is, and then spend the next several weeks optimizing that so you know exactly what the steps are, it'll be much faster for you to get in the groove and be productive.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: So no matter what kind of writer you are, come up with a formula. Come up with a system, a way of addressing it. It doesn't mean you can't deviate from the formula from time to time. I do. But at least you have a track to get you started and a way to get your blog posts out that works for you 90 percent of the time.

Michele: All right, so I have one final question for you. I know some posts require a lot of research, and we didn't really include research in this 70 minutes.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: That would be something you would do before you even started this process. Is that correct?

Michael: Not really. Because of the blogging I do, I'm writing out of my experience and what I know, so I'm not doing a lot of research.

Michele: Okay.

Michael: If I am doing research, I'm doing research where I try to validate a concept or bring third-party validation to it, so I can do that pretty quickly on Google.

Michele: Okay, so you can still do it in that timeframe.

Michael: Yeah.

Michele: All right. Just to recap one last time, these 10 steps can help you write a blog post in 70 minutes or less. To begin, start the night before. Second, use downtime to think. Third, go offline. Fourth, turn on some music. Fifth, set a timer. Sixth, use a template. Seventh, write without editing. I have to keep telling myself that. "Write without editing."

Michael: I know. It's one of the hardest ones.

Michele: Eighth, edit and format. Ninth, add graphics, links, and metadata. Tenth, publish a draft. I mean, that's just a really good, solid system right there.

Michael: Good. Well, it has worked for me.

Michele: Well, if you enjoyed today's conversation, you can get all of the show notes and a full transcript of the entire episode at michaelhyatt.com. In addition, if you'd prefer to watch rather than just listen, we do have the entire video posted at michaelhyatt.com as well. Could you do us a favor?

We'd love for you to head on over to iTunes and rate the show. It makes such a huge difference and really is the only way we can try to get this episode and this information to the people who truly need it. Do you have any final thoughts today, Michael?

Michael: Yeah, I would just challenge listeners to give this a try and see what works for them. I'd love to hear them report back in the comments on the show notes back at my blog at michaelhyatt.com. If this worked for you or if it didn't work for you, how you tweaked it, how you made it work for you... I can learn from other people, and I'd love to hear from them.

Michele: All right, then. Thank you again for being with us today.

Until next time, remember: Your life is a gift. Do what matters.