

# On Blogging Well

Friday Freebie No. 1

## Seven Things Your Blog Needs to be Successful

1. **Your Interest.** If you aren't interested in your blog, why should anyone else care? Blogging takes time and effort, so if you're not passionate about it, you may burn out quickly, subjecting your blog to the dreaded fate of countless blogs – inactivity. (Read "[Ready, Aim, Blog.](#)")
2. **Your Expertise.** Writing about a topic you're familiar with lends that air of authority readers respect. Inside knowledge also makes the research process go more smoothly and enables you to identify with your target audience because you're one of them. Best of all, you'll be able to share stories about your personal experience with your topic.
3. **Interest of Others.** Yes, you can blog strictly for pleasure, whether or not anyone else on the planet is interested, but part of the satisfaction of blogging is the interaction with your "tribe." Most blogs have an identifiable and accessible audience. Who is interested in your topic? Where are they? How can they be reached? A couple of suggestions – browse through groups on [Face book](#) and join a few that relate to your topic. Invite your newfound friends to visit your blog. Do a [Twitter](#) search on your topic and see who's tweeting about it. Follow them. Send direct messages, inviting those Twittermates to your blog.
4. **Topic.** More precisely, a well-focused topic. (We discussed [niches and slants](#) earlier.) If you tell a friend you've started a blog, they will likely respond, "What's it about?" If you say something like, "Art." They may nod and go on, never taking the time to read the words you've worked so hard to write. But if you say, "How learning to draw incorporates the use of both sides of your brain," (based on Dr. Betty Edwards' bestselling book, *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*), your friend will be much more apt to stop by and check it out. Yes, Dr. Edwards' book is about art, but her unique angle is what caught the attention of her audience. ([This post](#) discusses how to brainstorm different angles to help you find your niche.)
5. **Marketing.** Sadly, it's not always compelling content that launches a blog to stardom – it's usually great marketing. An effective marketing plan can tilt the scales of success in your favor. Promotion will be a recurring topic of On Blogging Well, but here's a little tip from marketing guru [John Kremer](#): Do five things every day to promote

your product. Yes, your blog is a product, even if you're not using it to sell anything. (Read [this post](#) to learn why.) What five things can you do today to get the word out about your blog? These things don't have to be glamorous. The key here is consistency. Five things EVERY day. Send a tweet. Post a Facebook link. Hand out a business card. Phone a friend. Write an email. Boom, you're done. Make a list of simple things you can do daily as well as some more complex ideas. Like I said, we'll get into market strategies, but you can start your five-a-day plan today.

6. **Your Time.** Blogging can be one of the most gratifying things you do in a day, but it does take time. Time to plan, time to research, time to type, time to market, time to respond. We haven't yet talked a lot about why bloggers blog, and we'll soon discuss that, but for now, make a list of the reasons you began a blog. Put that list in a prominent place on your desk. When life gets hectic and you wonder what possessed you to become a blogger, read your list.
7. **Your Control.** This point will likely stir up more questions than answers, but I'm a firm believer in owning your own domain name — IF the purpose of your blog is for anything beyond a personal online journal. True, there are [dozens of choices](#) for free blogging platforms — [Homestead Blogger](#), [Blogger](#), [WordPress](#), [LiveJournal](#), and the list goes on — however, I've heard more than one sob story from friends who became discouraged over the lack of control they had over their blog. Some have even lost their entire blogs. In general, you get what you pay for, and blogging is no different. If you are an author, small business owner, or using your blog to promote any kind of product or service and you're using a free blogging platform for your blog, my advice is to transfer your blog to your own domain as soon as you're able to do so. Many of my reasons are technical, and I won't get into that at this time, but one for instance that most of you can relate to is value. Not just actual value, but *perceived* value. In so many ways, the blogger/reader relationship is an adaptation of the teacher/student bond — one of the most complex connections (psychologically speaking) you can develop. That said, even though a small segment of the open source community is screaming "Information wants to be free!" to the blogging realm, in reality, information wants to be valuable. And when bloggers take the little (and I do mean little) extra effort to pay for a domain name and hosting of their own blog, it not only gives them more technical freedom (more on that later), but the reader thinks, maybe even subconsciously, "Wow. This blogger must be serious. I'd better pay attention to what she's saying."

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