

# ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

## 01. So, Why a Podcast?

You're listening to episode 01 of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast where I answer the question, *why a podcast?* You'll find some encouragement to do whatever it is you've wanted to do for a while now, but just haven't done it yet. Here we go!

This is the first official episode of the Encouragement for Real Life podcast! Friend, I can't tell you how excited I am. Okay, I'll try, but I'm not sure my words will be adequate. I'm excited because I enjoy encouraging others. I enjoy sharing life with others. And I enjoy helping others live out their real lives with purpose and meaning. A podcast is one way I can do that.

There's more than one answer to the question, *why a podcast?*, but that's one of them. To encourage and bless others, namely you.

Reason number 2 is I've wanted to begin one for a very long time. Probably before COVID hit in our area in March 2020. Bless his heart, my husband even equipped me with a new microphone to get me started. I even downloaded software to record a podcast. But the microphone stayed in the box and the recording software remained asleep in the depths of my laptop. For months. Deep down, I'm fully aware my lack of action was because of fear. Fear of the unknown. Fear that I didn't know anything about podcasting. Fear of *what if nobody listens?* Fear of *what if I stink at this?* Fear of *who am I to think I can start a podcast?* You name it, I probably had that fear flutter through my brain at some point.

After COVID appeared on the scene, the months that followed were a blur for me. Can you relate? I was faithfully adding encouragement to my blog (almost daily some weeks) because I needed that encouragement the most. My brain was so fuzzy, I just couldn't think about adding something new back then. It would have been a great time to start a podcast, but I felt I didn't have the brain capacity to learn something new right then. At least that was my excuse. As with many of us, I was just focused on staying alive with so many new unknowns with this virus!

Days turned into months and months into a year. I've found that's what happens in real life. For you, too? That saying, "the days are long, but the years are short" is so very true, isn't it? Still, the microphone and the recording software remained idly tucked away.

However, for the last three months or so, I've felt a stirring within me. I felt God was wanting me to do something new. Without receiving much clarity, I simply kept my eyes and ears open. Asking, "God, show me what it is you want me to do."

Reason number 3: All within the last month, a number of people out of the blue have asked me, "Do you have a podcast?" I would politely say, "No I don't. But I have a great website with an active blog. And I'm

on all social media outlets.” I would then notice their likely-not-intentional disappointed faces. I began to wonder, maybe I should start a podcast?

Reason number 4: I attended the Northwestern Christian Writers Conference in St. Paul, MN mid-July. In one of the breakout sessions the dynamic speaker talked vibrantly about her podcast. I was enamored with her words and her love for podcasting. I didn’t know a thing about it, but I was captivated to learn more.

*God am I to start a podcast?* I felt He was opening doors for me to walk through.

Reason number 5: when I shared this desire and prompting with my online prayer group the following Monday morning, Jen an experienced podcaster, said she would help me get started. We chatted on the phone later that week, and she sent me some helpful links to check out.

Reason number 6: A friend of mine, Jodi, featured me on her podcast the very next week and I secretly paid attention to the podcasting process she took me through. She loves podcasting and I could tell just how much with how she conducted our interview. She pointed me to another podcaster who helps women build their podcasts. I soaked up many of her episodes. Again, doors opening.

Reason number 7: This is when it gets very interesting. I announced in our Monday morning prayer group on August 2 that my goal was to set up my podcast by September 1. I was met with lovely encouragement by my prayer friends. But the kicker is, I sat down the very next day at my dining room table with my laptop. I took the microphone out of its box and opened the recording software. With the searching and googling I had already done, I let ‘er rip and recorded and posted the introduction episode! All in the same day!

What??? As I felt God opening doors, I just continued to walk through them, one at a time. He amazingly guided me every step of the way. Completely and totally. Not to debut on September 1, but to start the podcast on August 3, with a launch on August 16!! Isn’t that crazy??!!

I’m still amazed at how it all came together. This podcast is a product of God’s will and Him prompting me to get off my rear end and give it a try.

Three lessons I’ve learned through this process that we can apply to our lives.

1 – God’s timing is perfect. I thought 2020 would have been the perfect year to begin a podcast, and for some it was. But it wasn’t God’s timing for me. Even though fear and brain fog held me back, it wasn’t the right season for this podcast. With how quickly and efficiently He led me through this podcast preparing process (all within two weeks of leaving the conference), this season is clearly in His perfect timing. You and I can trust God’s timing in every part of our lives. He knows what He’s doing.

2 – When God opens doors, He walks through them with us. What door could God be opening for you? Is He prompting you to do something specific and you feel this urge to step out in faith? When God calls us, He equips us. So, if He’s opening a door, we can trust we won’t walk through that door alone. He will guide us if we just follow.

3 – Fear doesn’t have the final say. This process reminded me again how fear tries to run our lives. Especially when it’s something God is calling us to do. If there’s some sort of fear standing in the way of us stepping out in faith, we can remember fear is a liar. It does not have the final say. God does.

One verse that continues to come to my mind is this: Proverbs 3:5-6. The Message translation says it this way, "Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track."

So, friend, that's sums up my answer to the question, "Why a podcast." I pray God encourages you, not only through this episode, but through each week's edition. We'll see you next time.

*Julie Lefebvre*