

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

53. Celebrate With Me: One Year of the Podcast!

You are listening to episode 53 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast titled, "Celebrate With Me: One Year of the Podcast!" Thank you for joining me. I'm thrilled we get to journey together today. Speaking of journey, one year ago today, on August 9, 2021, I hit publish on the first official episode of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast. One year ago on this very day! What a journey it has been! So, it's fitting that today we celebrate the podcast's one year anniversary (or birthday)! Hang with me here for the next short while and together we'll find some encouragement and hope along the way as we do so. Let's get to it.

Cue the confetti! Ready the sprinkles! Strategically place the balloons!

I'm celebrating one year of the podcast over here today!

And it all began at last summer's Northwestern Christian Writers Conference when the idea of starting a podcast popped into my head. If you know me, you know once I have an idea, I tend to run with it. So, it was no surprise I came home from the conference, and three weeks later the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast was born! I share the detailed whys behind the podcast in episode 1.

That all sounds simple, doesn't it?

But quite honestly, it wasn't. Because I had no idea how to launch a podcast. I had no idea how to record an episode. And I also had no idea how to go about getting it to where it needed to go so others could listen to it. But none of these things were my greatest obstacle, however. My biggest obstacle was my fear. Friend, I was scared. I was scared to try to something new. I was scared to step out of what was comfortable for me. After all, what if I failed? What if the podcast failed?

Ever feel something similar? Are you ever scared to try something new, too? Are you hesitant to step out because you don't know what you're doing?

Good thing God knew what He was doing, and I felt He was leading me in this. So I just took the next step. And then the next one. And the next one. Pretty soon, actually before I knew it, my podcast was ready to launch!

You know? We can do anything when we partner with God!

What's the thing you're scared to do?

Is it to start your own podcast? Or begin a business?

Is it to go back to school? Or apply for that job?

Is it to quit the job or follow your dream?

Friend, I encourage you to pray about it, then take the next step. Partner with God in whatever it is and see how He leads you. If I can start a podcast and keep it going for 53 weeks, you can do the thing that scares you, too. You can!

Sometimes the blessings come from what once scared us.

Even though a year ago I really didn't know what I was doing, I was eager to learn.

I fell in love with podcasting along the way.

And isn't that what we do? We learn as we go in life, right? We don't always know exactly what we're doing, but through trial and error, we figure it out. Or we do a search or watch a tutorial video. We get creative and find a way. Yes?

But to be completely transparent, I was tempted to hang it all up around episode 14, because I felt I bit off more than I could chew. Hosting a podcast was more work than I expected, and since I'm a so-called one man band here, it felt a bit overwhelming doing all of the podcasting things. In fact, in episode 15 I titled that one, "Now Is Not the Time to Give Up." That episode was probably more for me than anyone else.

But also if you know me, you know I'm not a quitter. I will only quit when God tells me to quit. Like the time I quit softball my senior year of high school. Or the time I quit working at a local mission because God told me to "get out." Or like when I quit leading in Bible Study Fellowship last fall (highlighted in episode 7). Also like the day when I made the decision to quit caring so much of what others think of me.

Quitting isn't a bad thing when God tells you to do so.

But this time He didn't tell me to quit.

So I didn't. But secretly, I kinda wanted to. But as I wrote this episode, I found some interesting statistics that might explain why I was feeling the way I was around episode 14.

"90% of podcasts don't get past episode 3. That's 1.8 million who quit. Of the 200,000 left, 90% will quit after 20 episodes. That's another 180,000 gone. To be in the top 1% of podcasts in the world you only need to publish 21 episodes."

Jack Butcher on Twitter

So, it's clear I'm not the only one who ever felt like quitting. And I have to say it feels pretty good to be in the top 1% of podcasts in the world! (That alone is worth celebrating, right?!)

And you know? Some days I still feel like I don't know what I'm doing. But I keep putting one foot in front of the other.

Isn't that like life though?

We just keep putting one foot in front of the other. No matter what we're walking through or what circumstances we find ourselves in. We just keep going. We don't quit. Because we know we're learning and growing and becoming more like the people God is transforming us to be. One step at a time. One moment at a time. And one day at a time.

And here we are.

At episode 53. A year later than when all of this began. And I can say I'm thrilled to be here. More importantly, I'm thrilled that you're here. As I say often, I'm glad we get to do this real life together.

No matter if you've been with me from the beginning, or if you're a new listener today, or somewhere in between, I'm thankful for you. I'm thankful you've chosen to spend a few moments with me today. Thank you so much. I don't take that lightly, and I consider it a true honor.

I wish you could celebrate with me in person today.

Maybe over tea or coffee. Or over cupcakes covered in sprinkles. Or on a park bench with ice cream cones in hand. Those would be a fun ways to celebrate one year, wouldn't they? But since that's not likely possible, we can celebrate in other ways.

So, to start off, I'd love to celebrate in learning which episode this year has encouraged you the most? Which episode has been your favorite? You can message me on any of my social feeds with your answer or below the podcast post on my site.

A few of my favorites this year are:

- How to Be a Positive Person in a Negative World, Episode 9
- If God Is Not in a Hurry, Why Are We?, Episode 12
- What in the World Are We Thinking?, Episode 39
- Life Is One Big Adventure With God, Episode 45
- Life Is Too Important to Live Distracted, Episode 52

Because these messages are all near and dear to my heart.

I'd also love to celebrate one year of the podcast by gathering us all together for a fun girls' night out.

But since that's not possible either, and our next local event isn't scheduled until September, I have an idea! I invite you to do something fun to celebrate with me on your own. (I'm giving you a reason to do something fun!) Grab a special dessert on your way home today and eat it first with your family before dinner tonight. Take the kids out for ice cream, or make root beer floats at home. Go take a long walk with your sweetheart or relax with a nice soaking bath. Do something that brings you joy and feels like a celebration. Then let me know what it is you did! I can't wait to read about it and be a part of your celebration from afar!

Tonight we plan to gather our family for a short celebration, even if it is with carry-out and a fun dessert. You can bet I'll take photos and share them in my socials!

Celebrating one year of the podcast deserves one more unique way to celebrate. Because you are the reason this podcast exists and keeps going, it would bring me great joy to highlight you! Leave a review wherever you are listening to this, and I will highlight you through your review in a future episode and through my socials. It'll be a fun way to thank you again and again for being a loyal friend and listener! I appreciate you!

What can you expect in future Encouragement for Real Life episodes?

You'll continue to find encouragement and inspiration in your real life right now through each episode. You'll hear some fresh content along with a variety of encouraging themes. And you might even hear some interviews in upcoming episodes! Stay tuned and be sure to subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode. I think you'll continue to enjoy what you receive from this podcast each Tuesday!

Have you checked out my free encouragement resources yet? On my site you'll find hope-filled lock screens, usable social posts, and fun and encouraging printables--all free and designed just for you. And if you follow me on social media, you might have seen how my husband and I used one of the fun scavenger hunts from these resources on our anniversary yesterday! Let me tell you, these scavenger hunts are very popular and are simple and inexpensive ways to bless someone with a fun activity on their special day. The link for my resources is in the show notes.

Come on over to our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. We're discussing how to remain encouraged over there this week, and I invite you to join the conversation. We call this space the most encouraging place on the internet! The link to this group is in the show notes as well.

It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, there's no way I could have made it this far without God's guidance, His equipping, His wisdom, and His strength. I would have quit back at episode 14 if I had tried to do this on my own without Him. So, I celebrate Him today and what He's done this year. To God be the glory!

Thank you for making this year possible.

Thank you for celebrating with me today. And thank you for all you do to make a difference in your corner of the world. Celebrating one year with you makes this day extra-special. Again, I'm glad we get to do this real life together. God bless you!

Julie Lefebvre