

- Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. So I know that some of you listening to this podcast right now, you've been around for a while and you've seen me transform from having a little blog to writing a cookbook and putting out cooking videos and, and really watched the whole transformation. And oftentimes I'll get messages from you where you're like, I've been with you since the beginning and it's just like so humbling, that you've stuck around with me for this long because I've been through a lot of iterations and I've had to figure a lot of things out and there's definitely been some bumps in the road on this blogging slash business journey. So in today's episode I thought it would be fun. We're going to do something a little bit different. I'm going to pull back the curtain and I don't have a script or an outline for this.
- Speaker 1: [00:56](#) I'm just going to talk through just my business and I want you to kind of get an inside look of what I have done over the last nine years. Cause I've been blogging since 2010 which is insane. But over the last nine years to grow my blog, the Prairie homestead from just a little personal journal to an actual business that not only supports us full time, it's our family's income, but it funds all of our homestead projects and has really opened the door for us to become full fledged entrepreneurs. So this is gonna be a little different. It's going to be really raw and really transparent and I think it's going to be good. So here we go. I'm your host Jill winger. And for the last 10 years I've been helping people who feel disenchanted by modern life. I'll show you how to create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashioned skills.
- Speaker 1: [01:58](#) So over the last year with a cookbook coming out, it was a really big process to launch that. I've done a lot of interviews for different podcasts and radios things and magazines or whatever. And inevitably, one of the first questions people ask me is, how did you start your blog? Or how did your business begin? Or why did you start your business? And part of me kind of wishes I had some sort of grand mission statement or purpose statement behind what I have been creating for the past nine years. And I guess I do have more of a mission statement now, but when I started I did not. And it was, it's kind of a funny story. Like I definitely started without grand intentions, without a plan, without any idea of what it would become. And so I know a lot of you are also working on creating businesses because homesteading breeds entrepreneurial tendencies.
- Speaker 1: [03:03](#) I have found and many of you also are thinking of starting blogs or you already have blogs. So I'm hoping that just in sharing my

story, it'll give you guys a picture of what is possible and maybe some ideas and practical inspiration that you can take and apply to your own situation. So like I said, I did not start the Prairie homestead with grand aspirations. I was a brand new mom back in 2010 when it began. I had Mesa, our firstborn and I had quit my job working at a vet clinic. I was a vet tech for a couple of years, because I was, you know, vet techs don't make a lot of money and it was 30 miles away. So to drive to work and put Mesa in daycare, it would just not have made sense financially. Not to mention I didn't want to do that.

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I wanted to stay home with her. It was always my intention to be a stay at home mom. So I quit my job and here I was 30 miles from civilization with Christian, my husband working all day at his job and I started to lose my mind to put it bluntly. I am a type A personality. You guys may have figured that out if you followed me for any length of time. I like to have a lot to do. And I noticed that the absence of having a job or having a purpose, I mean, I did, I did sense purpose. I had purpose in being a mom and taking care of Mesa. But I had one baby and she was tiny and she slept a lot. And so I was just kind of spinning my wheels kind of feeling like I was going to lose my mind.

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I just didn't have enough to do. So at that point homesteading, which I didn't really even know what to call it then, but I was, it was kind of my thing. I was just starting to get into it and I was just starting to have these visions of growing our own food and making food from scratch. Like I remember when I first had this moment where I realized I could make tortillas. I was like blown away because I was a 100% junk food girl up to that point, like spam was my specialty, I would like grate it up and make spam sandwiches and we did frozen taquitos and all of the Crisco's and all of the cream of mushroom soups, like my company meal, my fancy meal for company was tater tot casserole, the bag of frozen tater tots and a can of cream of mushroom and some frozen green beans, like you put it all together with some burger.

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Anyway, so I was not inclined to this natural lifestyle or to this homegrown idea prior to this period of my life. Um, it wasn't raised that way and I definitely liked country things and rural life. But as far as growing food and how that fit into that, it was not on my vision board until right after I had Mesa, during the time I was pregnant with her. So I had been dabbling in these homestead activities for the very first time and I was really excited about it and I wanted to talk about it and I was looking at chickens and I was learning how to do composting and I was

doing all these things. And I realized very shortly that no one around me really cared. I'm not saying that to be negative or mean to the people in my life at that time, but they just didn't have vision.

Speaker 1: [06:28](#) I did, which there's no reason they should have. And so I found that I would be like, I made yogurt today. And they're like, that's nice. So, and I could tell that they were like, and you're getting weird, or you know, I wanted to talk about goats and chickens and grinding up grain and all these things that I was learning and I didn't have a sounding board. I didn't have a community to share in my excitement. So I started this blog because at that point blogs were my connection to the world. I learned all my first bits of from scratch cooking, all that advice and recipes that came from blogs. Right? Um, it was hard to get to the library. The library was 30 miles away. So I found that I relied heavily on the internet to give me this inspiration as this new stay at home mom.

Speaker 1: [07:18](#) So I started my own blog and honestly that my thought was when I started it probably, I'm not going to do this for very long cause I could see what all the other bloggers were doing and I knew it was a lot of work and I thought meh, probably won't stick with this, but I'm going to try it. Why not? Now, interestingly enough, when I was in high school, I was homeschooled when I was in high school, I had a blog back then and this was back before blog was even a term people used. So I had to be like, people be like, Jill, what are you doing on the computer all day? I like, I'm working on a website because if I said blog people would not understand. So I had this website, it was back before blogger or Blogspot was even around and you had to code it from scratch and upload it via FTP because WordPress wasn't a thing.

Speaker 1: [08:09](#) Like all of these tools we have now were not a thing. Plugins did not exist. So you coded it. I have, there is these two HTML tutorial websites. I would look at those for hours. I would figure out how to code things. I made my own graphics. They were interesting through a free knock off version of paint, like paint shop pro. It wasn't, I couldn't afford the actual one cause I was like 15 years old. But um, I got a knock off freebie, which didn't work very well. But it was the best I could do. So anyway, there I was like coding this blog. It was about horses cause I was a horse girl. I still am a horse girl. So I had this horse blog at age 15, so I had a little bit of blogging knowledge, but I had put that part of my life away when I like left home and grew up and I'm like, I don't need to do that anymore.

Speaker 1: [08:58](#) So here I was opening up a blog again with very uninspired intentions, just more of a brain dump. So I did a little bit there. I posted here and there, um, I didn't know how to write a blog post. They didn't have pictures, I didn't know how to upload a picture to the blog. I started on Blogspot, which was what everybody did back then. And I just started sharing what I was doing now. I did that for awhile. I wasn't making money. I had no intention of making money. Nobody was really reading it, just a few people. And it all changed one day. And what happened is I had a friend who I knew from college and she messaged me and said, wow, Jill, I really like what you're doing. I could see myself wanting to do the same thing someday and like looking back now, that seems like such a trivial comment.

Speaker 1: [09:57](#) Just a simple comment, but it really like got my attention and I thought, Oh my word. What if I could actually inspire other people to start eating better and growing food and keeping chickens and doing all these things that I am finding so much satisfaction from. What if I could actually help other people do the same? And so that was the moment where I switched from. This is all about me. It's my journal, it's my story. It's my everything to how can I show up to help other people do the same thing. That was the light bulb moment for me. You never know. It's kind of funny. You never know when the light bulb moments going to come. You usually don't know until you look back and you realize that was like a pivotal point in your journey. That's funny. I don't you think it's funny when you like realize the things that shifted the course of your, your life forever.

Speaker 1: [10:46](#) Anyway, that was one of mine. Now from that point forward I started to get serious, and I actually started to care and I actually started to treat the blog like it was a responsibility versus just a random hobby. And I think that is something that everyone can take note of and apply to their situation because I see a lot of bloggers these days still treating blogging like a hobby as sometimes it is a hobby. A lot of times bloggers have other jobs they work in town. So I get it that not everybody can just go from zero to 60 overnight. But if you want your blog or if you want your online business to go to the next level, at some point you have to become ruthlessly committed to it. Like almost to the point of obsession. And that's where I was and I, I tend to have that type of personality traits anyway that when I'm passionate about something, I get borderline obsessed.

Speaker 1: [11:48](#) You can ask my sister and my parents, about my childhood, cause that was me. Very borderline obsessive. But you'll notice that a trade of a lot of entrepreneurs is they, they also are

obsessive. So if that's you, you're in good company anyway. So I got very much obsessed, for lack of a better word, on how to make this blog grow. And I wanted it to grow because I wanted it to reach more people and I wanted to show up to serve other people and help them feel inspired. And when I started to shift my messaging a little bit, I noticed I started to get more traction because it was less about what's in it for, what about me and more about what's in it for these other people. So that was a big pivotal point as well. But I started to pay attention what other bloggers were doing and see how they were handling their businesses and what they were producing and what they were creating.

Speaker 1: [12:38](#) And I started to model my business after them. Now mark, mind you, I'm not copying them, but I was modeling after them and that's something that everyone can do. Follow the people that you admire in whatever you're wanting to become good at and model what they're doing because success leaves breadcrumbs. Success leaves a path and you often can see what they're doing. And if you get really clear on analyzing why they're doing what they're doing, it gives you a lot of tips for your own path as well. Just promise me you're not going to copy them because nobody likes that. Don't copy anybody. Just use it as a springboard to create your own brilliance. So I think it was, 2010 when I started, 2012, I wrote my first ebook, your custom homestead. You guys may have seen it. It's still around.

Speaker 1: [13:30](#) It's a revised version. And the point of your custom homestead was to help people see a path towards homesteading. So the internet was a different place back then. eBooks were still novel. eBooks are not novel now. And I created a little page for it. And I remember the day I launched it, I was sitting at my kitchen Island and I put it out to the world. I send out to my little teeny email lists and the sales wouldn't stop. And they were dinging and dinging. Cause back then I still have notification sounds on my computer now. I've turned those off a long time ago. Nothing dings. I hate dinging phones. I hate dinging computers. Back then it was still novelty so it would ding and dinging. And um, I was blown away that I could actually create something that someone would want to buy because it was a value to them.

Speaker 1: [14:23](#) And I think that ebook was definitely the first part where I started to see myself as a small business owner instead of just a random blogger who was doing it for free. And um, yeah, that was, that was the, uh, the first, the first real product that was mine. Now up like up to that point, I had done a few little affiliate promotions and things like that, but that was my first

product and it gave a of definition to my brand and my business and what I was creating. So it was really, really crucial. And it also put this idea in my head of setting goals based on my business, not just shooting in the dark, not just trying a bunch of random stuff, hoping it's something stuck to the wall. I remember reading an ebook by another blogger where she said that she had made \$10,000 off an ebook launch and I got that number in my head and I thought what would happen in our life if I could make even \$5,000 in ebook launch?

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And it became my goal to, you know, make a couple hundred dollars a month, a couple thousand dollars a month that I could start saving up as extra money in for our, our life. Like we were doing pretty good budgeting on the Dave Ramsey model, but I was looking for a way to save up for a house remodel or some of the bigger goals we had. And I thought this business could be the path. So I started to set goals and I started to have a vision of where I wanted to head with my business, not only who I wanted to serve in my business, but also where I wanted to end up as a result of my business. And that's really crucial if you're listening to this and you are a business owner, write that down because knowing where you're headed and knowing why you're going there is so key. So I'd say from 2012 until 2015, I spent a lot of time building social media.

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I spent a lot of time just getting my bearings in the online world. I wrote another book and the biggest thing that that came into our life at that point was doTERRA and essential oils. So I didn't, again, I, I tend to to Bumble into things unknowingly and then they end up becoming something bigger. But I bumped into essential oils in 2012 and I did not intend to start a business around them. I did not intend to do anything but just use them. And lo and behold, I mentioned it on a blog post and people started to ask about them. Now. Back then it was a different world and no one was talking about oils online like no one. So it was still a new thing. And so I didn't have fancy pages or systems or anything. I was just helping people get started with oils one-on-one.

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But it started to snowball. And from about 2013 to 2015 I've put all my energy into growing doTERRA and I still was blogging and I was still doing some of those things on the side. But the way the rate that doTERRA was growing was astronomical. And here's the deal. If you find a good network marketing opportunity, and I know there's a lot of negativity around them, which I think is so unwarranted, when you find a good, a good one, a good company, a good product, you really believe in the income potential with those is really amazing. Depending on the

compensation plan, you have to check into that. But doTERRA is, it was a solid company. It's a solid product. Their compensation plan was good. So I ended up using what I was making in doTERRA to not only fund our homestead and to fund our house remodel, but it also helped fund different things I wanted to do on the blog.

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And I was able to start paying for better site design and better plugins and starting to get a little bit more sophisticated. So I can't tell this story. You know, this, this podcast episode isn't about doTERRA. We'll do that in another episode. But I can't tell my blogging story without including doTERRA in it because it's was pivotal. It's a pivotal part of our story. And I, I kinda hate to say it cause it sounds so cliché, but doTERRA literally changed the course of our life. Not only with the knowledge I gained from pursuing that opportunity and the confidence in the personal development, but also just the funding. Like it funded us faster than anything I was creating online at the time. So anyway, it was, it was, it was pivotal. So 2015, we hit, the, the highest rank possible in doTERRA. And I still am doing doTERRA.

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It's not like I have stopped doing it, but I also got it to the point where I could start to look at other parts of my business and I realized, you know, I had to ask myself, do I want to keep doing the blog or do I want to just focus on doTERRA? And even doTERRA was and still is our biggest income stream, the blog is still my passion and I, I couldn't set it aside and I won't set it aside because the blog really encompasses who I am and how I want to help people. So starting in 2017 I was able to, well 2016 to put a little more effort into figuring out where I wanted to take my blog. And up to that point, I was still going a little bit on the shotgun approach to content creation and figuring out what I wanted to do with blog posts and emails and things with the Prairie homestead.

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But I was able to get, once I was able to get clear, it started to really refine my purpose, who I wanted to serve, what their problems were, and how I could show up for them. Magic started to happen and the first piece of magic was the cookbook. I started to explore the possibilities of a published book in 2016 and we signed a contract in 2017 and yes, if you're looking at your calendar, you know that the cookbook didn't come out till 2019 so it takes two years to produce something like a cookbook. But anyway, the cookbook was pivotal, not just because of being a published print book, although that was helpful as well, but rather because it helped me get laser focused on that, my brand and I wanted to be and how I wanted

to show up. And I'll always, always be grateful to the cookbook process even though it was hard.

Speaker 1: [20:54](#) And it was exhausting and I had six months to write the whole thing and get all the photos shot and all the recipes tested. And there were times I thought I wasn't going to survive. The cookbook brought a lot of clarity into my business and that's been the magic. The magic bits I think is the clarity. And once I was able to get clear, I feel like the blog really went from just a blog into an actual business and we went on to produce the cooking class and we've gotten clear on who we're helping and this podcast came from it. And, I feel like a lot more people have sat up and take notice and that's not good English. A lot more people have sat up and take taken notice of what we're doing. Once I got clear on why I was here and what I was doing.

Speaker 1: [21:49](#) So if I had one take away for you from this episode that you can apply to your own business venture. Know why you're doing what you're doing. And you might not know the full picture right now but start figuring it out and the layers will come off as you go. But that's when magic happens. That's when people start to recognize you. That's when you start to become a household name. That's what people start to align with you. When you know what, why you're doing what you're doing, then you can speak to the people who are here, tribe and it doesn't have to be through a cookbook like mine was or a print book. Um, there's other ways to figure that out, but I'll just say that that was my catalyst and it really help take us to the next level. So anyway, kind of fast forward to where we are today.

Speaker 1: [22:35](#) I work on the blog, part time each week. I don't, I don't do a full 40 hours just because our schedule doesn't allow, but we're able to produce a very comfortable fulltime income for our family based on the working part time on the blog. It is my passion project. I spend concentrated time working on it. There are things I say no to. There are things I sacrifice because I love running a business. It's not a hobby. It's a business, right? Take it very, very seriously. And I, you know, I started taking it seriously back in 2011, 2012 ish and I have still maintained that same level of discipline and a focus because it's something I'm very, I feel very strongly about. I have a purpose and a mission to help more people bring these old fashioned concepts into their lives because it's more than just the chickens and the sourdough bread.

Speaker 1: [23:28](#) Like there is very much deep, long lasting value to this lifestyle. So we have podcasts, we have video courses. We have a YouTube channel and blogging now is a little bit different than

blogging was back then. I feel like the state of blogging at the time of this recording, which is the end of 2019, um, it's different. People don't read blogs like they used to, and a website or a blog is more of a hub that shows who you are and what you have to offer, but you're going to be connecting more with your tribe in other platforms like YouTube or a podcast or social media. It's less about just pumping out blog posts and more about blog posts being a component of your overall business. Um, but yeah. Anyway, that was my, my ramblings of how I got to where I am today.

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And obviously there's more bits and pieces, but I hope that hopefully that gave you kind of a picture and a few things that you can take away and apply to your own situation. If you're building a blog or starting an online business, it's very gratifying. It's a lot of work. It's so much work, but building these businesses has been the best personal development journey I have ever been on. And not without stress and struggle and prying. Sometimes I'm wondering what am I doing and why am I here? But nothing will grow you that I know of as thoroughly as a person, as running a business. It's, it's powerful. Well, you can help a lot of people in the process. So hopefully that gave you some ideas. Um, and I wish you massive success in whatever you're creating, whether it's a blog or a podcast or YouTube channel, just keep with it.

Speaker 1: [25:23](#)

Don't quit even when you want to quit. I think consistency for me has been the secret ingredient. Sticking with it, even when I wasn't making a lot of money, sticking with it when I did not feel like it. There are days I don't feel like it. There's days I don't want to record podcast episodes. There's days I don't want to show up and do my computer work, but stick with it even when you don't feel like it and commit to getting a little bit better every day. And I know that if you stick with that formula, you will see the fruits of your labor sooner versus later. So I know there are a number of you who are listening to this right now who are looking for guidance in what you're creating in your business. If you feel like you have been shooting in the dark for a while or you're not sure why you're doing what you're doing, maybe your marketing messaging is not hitting home with anybody you want it to.

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Maybe you're having trouble getting traction to your social media pages or getting people to look at your website. If you are looking for clarity and a little bit of help in getting your business on the right track, I may be able to help. I am taking on a limited number of mentoring folks and I may have a slot for you. So if you'd like more information, shoot me an email over

at [jill@theprairiehomestead.com](mailto:jill@theprairiehomestead.com) I'm keeping this small. There is a financial piece to this just because I really want to be focusing on people who are very, very serious and dedicated to their business. But I would love to be able to help you take your business where you want it to go. So let's chat and see if we're a fit. So again, that's [jill@theprairiehomestead.com](mailto:jill@theprairiehomestead.com) let's talk and that is it for this rather unorthodox episode here on the old fashioned on purpose podcast. Just had to take a little diversion off of homestead topics and talk business for a little while cause it's definitely something I enjoy just as much as gardening and chickens. So thanks for listening. If you're so inclined, I would be honored if you'd hit subscribe and leave a review over on your favorite podcast player and I will catch up with you on the next episode. Talk later. Friends.