

CRAZY **W**INDOW



Meet the successful people behind unique blogs and podcast

Q. When did you start brilliant or insane and why did you create it?

I converted my personal blog into Brilliant or Insane in December of 2013. It was a sort of variety magazine format then.

I changed it to focus only on education in March of 2014. We now produce content about best practices in the classroom, trends in education, and education technology.

B or I is consistently ranked in Teach100's Top 20 education blogs, out of nearly 1,000 ranked.

Q. I never liked school and was happy to learn about you not liking the education system and school as well.

Would you share with us your thoughts on how education system could be improved?

The best and easiest improvement is to eliminate traditional grades and create an ongoing conversation about learning that gives students a voice.

Standardized testing is a huge problem, but one that takes more time and consideration to solve. In the short term, if teachers worry more about the whole child than they worry about curriculum, our students' lives will improve exponentially.



Mark Barnes has written six books on education technology, student-centered learning, using mobile devices and social media in the classroom, global learning and 21st-century assessment, using his revolutionary SE2R system.

Mark Barnes is a recognized thought leader and one of education's most dynamic speakers. A prolific content curator, Mark's social media shares reach more than five million educators every month.

Q. Why do you think it's important to have a no-grades classroom?

The short and simple answer is that grades are labels that lie about learning. We know as much or as little about an "A student" as we do an "F student."

The fact is most students who fail are not doing the work, so we don't know what they do or do not understand. Many so-called high-achieving students are simply good at playing the school game; they may not know any more than so-called low achievers.

The most important reason to eliminate grades is to involve students in the conversation about learning. When they explain what they know and why they do things, we get a clear picture of achievement.

Q. I have heard you discuss about failure that I am sure our readers would love to hear, even if they are no longer in school. Why is failure an important lesson to learn?

Some of the world's greatest inventors explain that they failed hundreds, even thousands of times, before they finally "got it right."

Failure, followed by reflection and iteration, leads to success. We need to get something wrong, work on it, try again, and repeat.

Unfortunately, we don't teach this way, and students suffer.

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Q. What are your thoughts on the importance of following passion in one's life?

It's been said that when you enjoy or are passionate about what you do, you'll never work a day in your life.

I love kids, and I'm passionate about education. This is what I do, and it's never work. If we can pass this attitude to our students, we will serve them well.

MEET MATTHEW ALLEN

Q. How and why did you start dumbpassiveincome?

I actually started out blogging in the personal finance niche using the free Blogger platform. As I started to read and learn about the world of niche sites, I knew I needed to move over to WordPress.

I wasn't making any money with the personal finance blog anyway – so I ditched it and moved to WordPress and started all over. Dumb Passive Income was born and I pretty much created the blog to chronicle my journey to creating passive income online.

Matthew Allen is a full time trucker – part time blogger and imaginary entrepreneur. He is the only known trucker who is blogging about creating passive income online.



Q. People want to create passive income in order to leave their 9-5 job but you are taking a different route, why so?

Because I don't hate my day job. In fact, I rather enjoy it. I take great pride in what I do for my day job, and especially for the company that I work for.

I also enjoy all of the work I do online. But I have other priorities in life that take precedence and my internet endeavors are still very much just a side hustle thing for me. The extra income I am able to create enables my family and I to do things we might not otherwise be able to afford.

Q. What do you feel was most difficult in making real money when you started online?

Just figuring out which path I wanted to take. Way back when I first started out, I had no idea that I would enjoy writing and blogging. I tried all sorts of other scammy things to try to make money online before I started blogging.

Picking one thing and sticking with it has always been difficult for me – and is still one of my biggest challenges today. I always want to try new things before I finish the things I've already started.

Q. One awesome thing about doing two jobs that is no way related to each other?

One awesome thing about being a blue collar truck driver for my day job is that when I hit the clock each night when I am done – I don't have to think about work one bit until I punch in the next morning.

As for my internet side hustle stuff... I hardly consider it a "job." It's more like a hobby to me. A hobby that pays me money! What's not awesome about that?!

Q. One tip you would like to share with our readers on how to start making passive income.

If you haven't done so already, just start your own website or blog. It doesn't even matter what it's about. Just start something.

Find and read blogs by others in your niche and begin to network by leaving comments and even sending emails. Ask questions.

Most other internet marketers are more than happy to help.

Join forums or communities. These are the best places to get your questions answered. Don't worry about making money at first. Just network and produce content.

The money will follow soon enough. You will see.

MEET DAN DYNNESON

Q. When and Why did you start best-selling fiction podcast?

When I wanted to learn branding, I turned to Navid Moazzez. He helped me build a website using Parallax Pro and suggested podcasting was a great way to build an audience. When I attended his Personal Branding Summit, I watched a keynote by Meron Bereket on how to start a podcast. I learned that it was much easier to rank on the front page of iTunes in New and Noteworthy than to compete for the front page of Google, which is what everyone else is trying to do today.

There is research that suggests podcasts are the future of radio in the way streaming video (like Netflix) disrupted the cable industry. People can build a relationship with me by listening to my voice that I don't accomplish through written articles. It's easy to fake out articles; whereas vocal content is authentic. People get to know the real me.

To answer your question, I decided on the concept towards the end of 2014. I did recordings in advance so I could launch with four episodes and two months worth of content. The Podcast is free content, but I treat it as if it were content being paid for. Right now I am doing it to build an audience and build partnerships in my industry; later I will launch an online summit, which will be based on a freemium model. People that love free content will still be able to get it all for free.

Dan is the host of Best-Selling Fiction Podcast; who lives in the city that rains all year long, except in the summer (Vancouver). Loves driving boats and going to new and interesting places; has worked in forty below toiled in the harsh Canadian oil sands. When he's not writing, he's with better half.



Q. Why did you choose a unique concept for your show?

I love story writing and plan to publish my own fiction novels, and I want to know everything that it takes to become a bestselling author, so I created a podcast to find out these things but to stand out, I treat the show as if it was a cartoon or graphic novel. Each guest is the hero of their own story, which they share in the open format that I do. My job is to get them to clarify things then form it into a narrative later.

Q. What was the biggest challenge you faced while starting?

The biggest challenge is clarity and sticking to one thing. It's difficult because when you're starting out and don't have clarity you have to try out different things and figure out technology.

So as I was figuring out branding, I'd post an article once a month and write about different topics.

Eventually I settled on fiction writing. And why not, I love fiction. Doesn't that make more sense to combine two things I'm doing into one? It does to me. Now instead of writing about random topics, I'm using my website as my own publishing platform.

There's also the tough choice of prioritizing my focus into one thing. We share equal amounts of time so it's important to prioritize what matters.

I don't do transcripts anymore; I don't do my own drawings anymore; I've put two of my writing projects on hold; and right now my focus is on podcasting.

Q. What inspires and motivates you in difficult times?

I go through a lot of difficult times but I don't want to be defined as a victim of circumstance.

We're all victims of circumstance; so what motivates me is what's working. For me that's every article or podcast episode I publish; there's no time to celebrate because I'm focused on the next thing. I'd probably get depressed if I stopped creating things.

It's motivating to take a risk and be rewarded by people who say what you do makes a big difference in their lives. It motivates me that my family support what I do. It matters because it takes the sting off from difficult times where you doubt yourself. Case studies also motivate me.

I like seeing people in similar circumstances succeed; if they can do it, I can do it too, even if I might fail trying. I like seeing the ideas of others validated, then trying out those ideas and seeing them work.

Q. One best thing about being an entrepreneur that you would like to share with our readers.

The friends I make through this show, and the people that reach out to me are the best. There is no show without them.