



**SPI Podcast Session #88 -
The Creative Entrepreneur –
The Art and Journey of Srinivas Rao of Blogcast FM**

show notes at: <http://www.smartpassiveincome.com/session88>

This is the Smart Passive Income Podcast with Pat Flynn, session #88!

HAH! WHAT DID I TELL YOU?! 88 MILES PER HOUUUUUUUUUUR!

Announcer: Welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast, where it's all about working hard now so you can sit back and reap the benefits later!

And now your host: he wants to hear a voicemail from one of the kids out there, Pat Flynn!

Pat: Hey, what's up everybody? This is Pat Flynn and welcome to session 88 of the Smart Passive Income Podcast! #88 is, of course, a very, very significant number for me because 88 miles per hour is what it took to get the Deloran to go back into time in my favorite movie, Back to the Future. That's where that screaming quote from Doc Emmett Brown in the beginning came from. That was actually me just pointing my face away from the mic. I think it sounded kind of like it!

But anyway, I watched that movie as a kid, I fell in love with it, and speaking of kids--I know a lot of you who listen to the show actually ARE kids! Like, literally 8 to 12 to 16 years old. I've met some of--you guys are INCREDIBLY inspiring! I only wish I had your entrepreneurial spirit when I was your age. So parents out there, if you're listening to this with your kid in the car or in the house or wherever, that's exactly why I keep this show clean, but if you feel like your child has some sort of entrepreneurial spirit, they have questions, I would love to hear from them.

If they go to speakpipe.com/patflynn, you can have them use your mic on your computer or whatever, have them ask me a question! Whatever they have questions about, about entrepreneurship, business--maybe it's help with math homework, whatever! I just want to hear from them.

I would love to produce an episode that is all about answering kids' questions about entrepreneurship because I know this is incredibly important stuff, stuff that I wish I



knew when I was your age. I met some of you at meetups--I mean, you guys are-- some of you are writing BOOKS at age 10 and already doing research for some businesses. That is AWESOME.

For those of you listening out there who aren't kids, if that doesn't inspire you, to hear kids getting into this world of entrepreneurship and business--I mean, that is awesome. I don't know what else can inspire you. And of course I have two kids of my own, and they're pretty young, but I can already see my son sort of thinking differently, and I don't know if it's because his daddy is an entrepreneur, or whatever, maybe it's in his genes, but it's so cool. I would love to help kids out, and speakpipe.com/patflynn, love to hear from you.

Let's go on to today's episode. Today's an awesome episode because I have a guest who I've known for a very long time. I've met him in person several times at conferences, I've been on his show a few times, he's just an incredible speaker, an incredible interviewer, and somebody I actually really looked up to quite a bit and I still do, because he's been doing so much and he's gone through this incredible transformation over time and to see where he is now and what he's doing and what he's gone through to get here is just amazing. So I'm really, really happy to welcome my good friend Sriniv Rao, Srinivas Rao, from BlogCast FM.

You've probably, a lot of you probably listen to his show. He's done hundreds of interviews, like I think over 400, and it started out as an interview show interviewing other bloggers and their success stories, and we're going to talk about the transformation that he's made, and it just--his show has become so much more than that, so much more inspiring. He's doing these things like events and writing books and just, we talk about that and we talk about a lot of the numbers and success he's had recently, and what it took to get there.

So let's just get right to the interview, I'm so happy to welcome Sriniv to the Smart Passive Income Podcast. Sriniv, dude, what's up? Welcome to the Smart Passive Income Podcast!

Sriniv: Thanks, Pat. It's great to be here. It's funny because usually you're the one on the other side of the mic with me, so it's the first time we're doing this! So it's cool. Thank you so much for having me.

Pat: You know, I'm really excited about that, because, Sriniv, you know, I've been following BlogCast FM for a really long time, I've seen it grow and where it's been and



sort of where it is now--it's changed so much, and it's not really, you know, a podcast or an audio show about blogging anymore. It's grown to so much more now. How do you feel about where it's taken--or, like, the journey you've been on?

Srini: You know, it's interesting you bring that up, right? Because it's true, it's really not a podcast about blogging anymore. It's actually about much more. I mean, if you look at the last, maybe, 6-7 weeks of guests--funny, I can't remember the last time on the show where we were talking about blogging advice. I mean, this is a, it's a storytelling show, where we find ordinary people who are doing extraordinary things.

And of course they share tips and tactical stuff from their life, but talking about how to grow a blog is kind of a lost--that's just not what we do anymore on the show. I mean, I've had a happiness researcher who talked to me about scientifically proven advice to become happier. I've had a peak performance psychologist who was a Julliard trained violinist.

I think that what I would say is that what is happening is that the show is turning into a storytelling show that takes a holistic approach about how to run a business. Because, you know, your happiness is important to being able to run a business. Your health is important. And so really, I'm constantly on the lookout for ordinary people who do extraordinary things.

And it's funny, I had someone tweet at me the other day to say "Hey, I have a book called 65 Blogging Tips that I'd love to be interviewed about" and it was so weird to think I'm going to have to reply from the BlogCast FM account saying "We're not really looking for blogs to interview." You know?

Because I'm interested in stories, I'm interested in people who are doing real things. Not just--like, to me, I really think what drives my guest selection is curiosity.

Pat: Mhm. Who are the--you know, for those of you who haven't listened to Srini before, I highly recommend you check out BlogCast FM. If you were to recommend one or two episodes to people, which ones would they be?

Srini: Recently, we ran an interview with a woman named [Meg Worden](#). I mean, this is convenient, we've ran--9 of our best interviews are our most recent ones because of our upcoming event. But Meg Worden, you know, it's funny, somebody asked me, said, you know, "What's your favorite interview?"



I said "You know, I used to think I couldn't find one out of the 400, and it was an unfair question, but Meg had such an amazing story because she spent two years in federal prison. I mean, you talk about somebody who was a model of reinvention, radical transformation and possibility! It kind of makes you look at the things in your life and say 'What the heck am I complaining about?' I've got a world of potential and--"

So, what we're constantly doing is finding people like this, people who are really outliers, people who are, despite any sort of circumstances, in some cases because of their circumstances, and going on to doing these really amazing things.

Pat: Awesome. I'll definitely link to that in the show notes. I am really excited to check that one out. Actually I haven't checked it out yet.

You mentioned a lot of things about storytelling and bringing stories onto the show. I just want to emphasize, I mean, you and I both have done plenty of interviews together. I mean, you've done 4 times as many as me, so you're even more of an expert in this, but how important--I mean--let's talk about interviews really quick.

I think you and I would both encourage as many people as possible to get behind the microphone and start interviewing people for several different reasons, not just to bring interesting stories on your show but there are so many other benefits that can come from doing these interviews. What are some of the amazing things that happened in your life, or for your business, as a result of doing these interviews?

Srini: Well, that would take a whole hour to--we could spend a whole hour talking about that, but I've got an opportunity to speak at conferences, I've got an opportunity to collaborate with people on various projects. I think probably the greatest gift, of course, is just the connections that form and the knowledge that you learn.

But I want to comment on one thing. There's sort of this podcasting renaissance going on, and part of what makes what we do so different is that you'll find people on BlogCast FM that you'll never find in other shows, because I go out of my way to look for people who don't appear on other shows. That's not always easy, because I really--I don't want to tell the same story that's been told over and over again, you know? I mean, yeah it's awesome that you get Tim Ferris on your podcast, but trust be told, Meg Worden? A much better interview, because she's got a perspective that hasn't been spread a hundred times.



And don't get me wrong, I appreciate that somebody like Tim comes and shares his message, but there's a big difference between somebody like Tim, who is on a media tour promoting a book, doing interviews, and somebody who comes to share their raw, honest, sort of unmistakable truth.

And amazingly enough, I think that that's one of the temptations I've seen far too often with especially newbie podcasters who are starting these interview based shows, is they think "Oh, I just have to get a big name, I have to get somebody like Pat, I have to get somebody like Srini." Whereas to me, I mean, I'll tell you the real gems are the people who you might not think would be, but--you know, to me everything says, you know, if you find somebody whose story sounds fascinating to you, who cares how big they are?

I'll give you another example. [Greg Hartle](#) is my BlogCast FM backstage co-host, and now he owns a small equity stake in my company, and he's been transformative. But you know when I found Greg Hartle, his project, \$10 and a Laptop, was six weeks old. He didn't have a massive following.

So I think it's, you know, I think the thing we have to avoid when it comes to this is sort of, you know, for lack of something less crude, this whole hero worshiping mindset. Amazingly enough, I found a less profane way to say that.

You know, I think that we have to stop putting these people on pedestals and realize they're human just like us, and then of course realize that just because somebody is new to the web and new to the online world, it doesn't mean that they might not have pure gold to offer you.

Pat: Absolutely. Some of my most popular shows--I know some of my most popular shows are ones that were done with people who nobody's ever heard of before. Yes, I've had Tim Ferris on in episode 51, Gary Vaynerchuk's going to be the next episode for those of you listening. And that's cool, that obviously--there's just the name recognition alone will help the show, but some of the most popular episodes were the ones with the golden information from people nobody knew about.

Like Mike Doonan, who started an iPhone app company to help children with speech therapy, or Lain Ehmann who's making six figures doing scrapbooking. I mean, that's stuff that people can relate to, they can get on that same level as them because they're not on the pedestal.



Srini: Exactly. That's a big thing is relateability, right? Like, you have--one of the things, you know, we try to show models of possibility on our show. A lot of people--not to look at them and say "wow, that's amazing, I'm inspired, I could never do that" but to look at that and say "You know what? I have that inside of me, too."

Pat: Right. I love that, models of possibility. I'm writing this down right now.

Talking a little bit more about--I mean, we have a lot to cover and there's a lot of things I want to share. You're doing some amazing things with this event that's coming up that I want to talk about, you've written a lot of successful books recently, and you even got on the Glenn Beck show--and that's a CRAZY story I want to make sure you tell!

But let's talk about interviews really quick because this is something a lot of people are doing and a lot of people are starting to understand the benefit of doing interviews and reaching out. You know, it builds relationships with these people, like you said, it gives you all these new opportunities, you get to just make awesome connections. What are some tactical, strategical things that you've learned over the course of your 400 interviews that you feel you can share with people who are just getting into the interview process? How do you extract the best information from people?

Srini: Yeah. That's a great question, and hopefully one that I feel like I can do justice to. Obviously, everything that I've said before this is actually a foundational piece, so keep that in mind, but to me one of the big things is that you don't treat it like an interview, but a conversation. Because the problem--I don't like scripted, I can tell when somebody has planned out a series of questions, and it's the most uncomfortable, awkward feeling, in my mind.

Pat: You don't go into a conversation--like, if you and I were to talk at a coffee shop, we wouldn't be like--

Srini: Precisely.

Pat: Question #1, Srini, is this and this. Oh, next question, this is--and without any follow-up or anything.

Srini: And that's the thing. The cool thing with the approach that I take is you get to sit there and eavesdrop on a conversation I'm having with somebody in a coffee shop, and



it's just like me talking to a friend of mine. So that's one thing, is the conversational approach.

Now, this is debatable, and some people will say "I can never imagine doing that" but I think it's a pretty known fact by now that I don't script anything. The reason why I don't do that, and you know this, Pat, is it allows you to listen much more effectively.

And I think one of the common comments you'll hear is "Wow, nobody's ever asked me that before!" when you've been on [BlogCast FM](#). And even you can attest to this. I remember you saying "Yeah, you don't let somebody off the hook with a shallow answer." I drill them until I feel like there's nothing left there.

And the analogy I'll liken it to--here's a simple structure, actually, that I think will be useful. You ask a question, you listen to an answer, and then you ask a question about the answer that you've just been given. That way you have this repeatable structure and framework that you can keep doing. And you just use that until you get to the end of the conversation.

This takes some skill. I've done it for a very long time, so I've got it down, and I still work at it every day. Here's another thing--this sounds crazy to some people, but I go back and I listen to every interview 2 or 3 times. I listen to it once--why I do my own editing is so I can figure out what I would do differently and how I would change it.

Then I'll go...so, each interview I'll listen to it once, obviously while I'm doing the interview, another time when I'm editing and then another time I'll actually play it a few times when I'm going for a walk, and what I look for when I'm doing that is I try to find places where I felt there was more and I didn't actually dig deeper. What did I leave--what stone did I leave unturned that would've been juicy?

And then the third thing I would say, this is something that I feel way too many people miss, is that at the end of the day, the interview is not about the guest and it's not about you, it's about your listener. That is the most important person. The funny thing, the person that you actually don't have any interaction with in this process is the one that matters the most.

Pat: Absolutely. I want to touch on something you just mentioned, which is listening. Because I remember I struggled so much--and I know some people do this because I've been on interviews and I can just tell--it's hard to listen...I mean, this sounds



ridiculous, but when someone's giving you an answer after you've asked them a question, sometimes it's hard to listen!

I know when I was doing this for the first time, really what I was doing when people were answering was I was coming up with my next question or I was trying to figure out where to go from there. And so I wouldn't be able to follow up with these great questions. I think what you mentioned, just approaching it like a real conversation, where, okay, you don't even have to look at a piece of paper.

Maybe you have a little bit of an outline because you want to make sure you stay on course, but just actually listening and having a conversation. If you could put that in your head when you're interviewing people, it can do amazing things, again like you said, for your audience who's there listening on the other end.

Srini: Let me actually give you one actually tactical thing, because I know your audience really likes actionable things, and you do a really good job providing that in all of your episodes. You mentioned a piece of paper, and this is something that I use all the time. I call it a conversational map, right?

Let's say that we're in the middle of something, and especially when I had people, you know, when I had to start transitioning out of people who are bloggers, I was like "Okay, well I'm not going to ask you how you got started with blogging, I have to actually come up with questions that are relevant to your background."

What I would do is while they were giving an answer, I would draw an arrow and I would write my next question and then I would go back to listening. Again, it's one of those things that takes some balance, but it's funny because effectively what you're doing is you're creating a map of the conversation, but you're drawing it as you go so it creates this natural flow. That might be something that's actually helpful for your listeners.

Pat: That's really cool. Do you prep a lot for your presentations? Like, if you're going to interview somebody, how much prep work do you do?

Srini: Very minimal. Part of the reason I don't do a lot of prep work is that I feel too much research kills curiosity and creativity.

Pat: THANK YOU! Mm!



Srini: I'm not somebody who--like, because the thing is, I want to know the things that nobody has ever asked them about before. I want to talk to them about things I'm just morbidly curious about. And the problem is that we lose the opportunity to have those really genuine, really juicy conversations when we do too much research because research causes too much planning and the whole conversation sounds scripted.

I'll give you an example. We had Simon Sinek on our show recently, and it's funny because I was having, you know, guest with a BlogCast FM listener, and she said "You know, it's funny," because she said at the beginning of the interview it was the typical Simon Sinek--it literally was one of his speeches. And she said "I loved how when you got him to a certain point, you wouldn't let him off the hook and you made him talk about things that he wouldn't talk about elsewhere because he didn't--"

And you know, I think that's a common thread between BlogCast FM guest is that they share things that they don't share elsewhere, but part of that is because I don't do a lot of research, and I think it leads to really interesting conversations.

Pat: Absolutely! I have to 100% back you up on that. I don't do much research when I interview people as well because I feel like when I don't do the research, I am exactly in the same place as my audience, and I can ask the same exact questions that are on their mind when they're listening, too.

Srini: I never even thought about it that way. That's a really good point.

Pat: Sweet. Let's move on. Let's talk about this conference you have coming up, because lately on Instagram and on Facebook I've seen these amazing drawings come up and each drawing reveals another person who's going to be speaking at the event. A) where did the idea where this come from, B) how the heck are you putting it all together?

Srini: Funny you ask about the putting it together part, we're literally in LA right now. The reason I'm doing this interview from a coworking space is because we've been at venues all morning, you know, looking--and we have, we're going to another venue this afternoon. So let's talk about the where-did-it-come-from part.

One of the things that I kept seeing over and over, you know, I went to a lot of conferences, and the more I went to them the less I liked them. Something about them just...I didn't walk away feeling like "Wow, that was really amazing! That dazzled me! It took my breath away!" Moments it felt like that, but it was like "Why isn't the whole



experience like that? Why is it that we're sitting under florescent lights in hotel rooms? We're supposed to be the non-conformers and the unconventional people, and we're not actually doing anything unconventional, here. This is pretty standard."

Pat: So well said.

Srini: So I wanted to break all the rules in all those conventions. But I mean, obviously with 400 interviews you start to get perspectives on things.

And the other thing I wanted is I wanted an event where it wasn't the same people. I was sick of going to events where it was all the same speakers, and you know, I was like "there are some amazing voices out there, we need to celebrate these voices, we need to really put them on. You know, let's put the light on them. Let's put them center stage, and let's show the world that, you know what, these people matter."

I was reading Malcom Gladwell's book [*David And Goliath*](#), and he talks about, you know, I think it was the Impressionists. You know, a big thing in I think the 1700s or 1800s was that the salon was the place to actually hang your art, and if you got accepted there then you became famous.

Well, what these guys did is they said "You know what? Screw it. We're going to do our own private gallery opening." And of course those people went on...I mean, they're, like, I think people that were in that group include Monet, Manet and some other ones.

Really, the idea was, also, to work with the structure and the format and say "Why are we just sitting in a room all day passively consuming information?" I was like, the whole thing of being here is to create something interactive and engaging.

So I interviewed this guy named Erik Wahl sometime in the summer and he is really interesting because he's a graffiti artist and he wrote a best-selling business book. I mean, you should have him on your show, Pat, I think your listeners would love him. He's really inspiring, and the things is I asked him about his speaking is he'd gotten over 1000 standing ovations, and he told me his work is about taking extreme mashups of various artforms and combining them together to create epic audience experiences. So, what he does is he gets on stage, and he has rock music playing, he's painting on a canvas, and then in between the paintings he actually gives his speech, which is amazing!

Pat: That is awesome.



Srini: So, the thing is, there's no rule. That goes against every best practice for speaking. There's no rules for this. And that's the thing, it's like, here's a blank canvas, make art.

That's really one of the big driving forces behind this was let's do something so different, so unique and so unusual that when people walk away they say "Oh my god, we've never experienced something like that. That is the most unreal, mind-blowing, life changing experiences we've ever had." And so we're taking extreme mashups from different art forms, like the way we're opening the event is like a movie, not like a conference. Like, we actually have a movie trailer that we're working on, specifically to be the opening sequence of the event. So, we're approaching it more like a theatrical performance, with business content laid underneath it. I guess you could call it the Cirque du Soleil of business conferences, is the way I would describe it.

Pat: Hahaha, I love this because you know, it's sort of like--you've been to conferences and you and I have connected many times at these difference conferences, and you just felt like there was a need for something different, or you weren't being fulfilled at one of these conferences. So what did you do? you're just creating one of your own.

And I LOVE that. You're creating the conference of your dreams, basically.

Srini: Exactly. I wanted to create the conference that I wanted to go to. And you know, even the way I chose my speakers. Conventional wisdom might say "Well, Srini's interviewed 400 people, a lot of them are really big names with big e-mail lists who could, you know, they'll draw a crowd.

And you know, I'm like "Yeah, maybe, but that's not my signature. Anybody could do that. That's been done. How about doing something--" I mean, if you look at the common thread between our guests, there's only one, and that's the one that they're connected to me. Like, I wanted it to have my signature on it. So, you know it's basically what I call unmistakable. The only person that could get this group of people in the same room is Srini.

And the truth is, the other part that makes it really amazing is nobody's ever put this group of people into the same room. I jokingly call them the Ocean's 11 of the web, even though there's only 9 of them.

Pat: Nice. That's so cool.



Now let's talk about you actually planning this thing. What does it take to put on an event like this really quick?

Srini: You've seen my Facebook comments and I've joked many times on the BlogCast FM podcast like it's a bit like planning a wedding and starting a religion at the same time.

And...you know, we...the amount--so here's another thing that you have to think about. One of the things that I think a lot of events don't think about is they think it's just about gathering a bunch of cool speakers and putting them in a room and selling tickets. Greg Hartle has worked very closely with me on this. One of the questions he asked me right at the beginning, he said "What is the transformation that you want people to experience from being here?" and that drove every decision from that point forward.

The thing is, a conference should not be about the speakers. It's about the attendees. Everything we're doing is very attendee focused. We couldn't just go to our speakers and say "We want you, you get to pick what you're going to talk about." We actually picked--

What we did, the premise of the Instigator Experience is to bring a bold idea to life. I mean, we've sat down and in agonizing detail planning from literally the moment people walk through the door through the moment they walk out. Every transition between speaker, how are we doing the transitions, set changes, everything. It's a production. It really is. And part of it is to design this transformation, because so many things happen on a subconscious level that actually matter and so few people think about these details. So that's a big part of it is really, really being clear on what is the outcome for the attendee? In our case, it was "bring a bold idea to life."

The other thing is, we wanted people to start working on their ideas while they were there because too often people go home inspired and then they go back to their life and never do anything. And we were like, we're not going to let that happen.

We're also putting in an application process, specifically to make sure that we get a very, very diverse cross-section of people because the more diverse the perspectives are, the more everybody will grow.



Robert Greene wrote the book [Mastery](#). When I interviewed him, he gave me this beautiful analogy about consumption. He says, you know, the analogy of diversity, he said the more species there is in an ecosystem, the richer the ecosystem is. So really, by having an application process and ensuring a diverse group of people, we're going to create a very rich ecosystem. So as a byproduct, everybody flourishes.

Pat: That's really cool. And what I like about the application process too, and I see this when people sell courses and things like that. When people apply for something, they're almost committing to it, and what happens is when they are approved, if they are, they're going to be much more gun-ho about getting the most out of that experience.

Srini: Yeah. That's another thing, right? You want people who are serious. We don't want people that are just going to go there and go "That was amazing, cool" and here's the other thing, we're not allowing laptops or smart phones in the room. We're not, you know--because this is one of the big taglines is "This is not your typical business conference." I'm not interested in you marketing my event while you're there. I could care less about that. I'm interested in seeing you have such a radical transformation that next year I don't have to sell anything because you've had such a change in your life that people are lined up to be part of it again.

I mean, the thing is, even when it comes to venue selection, Pat. Like where I'm looking--we were at this place this morning, and it's not like--we're not looking at conference--we basically said "Nothing that resembles a conference" and our event planner is like "You guys are insane!"

I said it can't resemble a--no hotel rooms, no convention centers, no conference rooms. Nothing that resembles anything. And we were actually just at a place this morning where movies have been filmed. It's a studio lot that we can do--because the thing is, we, we're creating an environment that we'll be able--we're going to manipulate the environment multiple times. There will be set changes. Multiple times throughout the event, it'll seem like you're in a difference space, even though you're in one the whole time.

Pat: That's awesome. That's so cool. Where can we get more information about the Instigator Experience?

Srini: I think by the time your listeners are listening to this, our sales page will be up, and it'll be at TheInstigatorExperience.com. We're only selling 60 tickets, so...you know,



apply as quickly as possible. I'm going to approve applications in the order in which they're received, so...

Pat: I am--I wouldn't be surprised if by the time people hear this they'll go and it's already sold out.

Srini: [chuckle] That would be a high-quality problem to have.

Pat: Heh, absolutely! Let's move on to some of your books, Srini. Because you've been publishing some books and some of them have been doing really, really well. I'm on your Amazon page right now, your author page, and I see 5 books.

The first one--give us the journey of these books and sort of where they've taken you.

Srini: Yeah. I got to the point where I realized, ironically, even though I'd interviewed all of these people who were getting book deals, I didn't seem like there was a publisher knocking on my door. And I was like, okay, I'm done. I'm done waiting. I can't...I have something to say so I'm going to put it out in the world

The first book we did was called *Blog to Book Deal*. It was just repurposing of our interviews. You know, we--somebody had said "Hey you guys have all these interviews, you should just make them Kindle books." And our eyes were like "OH! Look! There's the gold mine! We're going to make thousands of dollars!"

That was, I think a wrong--part of it, the intention was flawed there, because it wasn't about providing anything that was useful it was all about us making money. That was the only thing we cared about. So that book flopped. It didn't do well. I think the best thing to come from it was [James Altucher](#) found it, and he became a friend of mine. and that to me was the most valuable thing to come out of that.

But I mean, I learned a lot of things. And so the next book was called [The Small Army Strategy](#). And you know, Mark Schaffer had pointed out that, hey, I'd been blogging at his blog for about a year and I'd been riffing on a theme the whole year.

You know, to me, I was like "Well, if that's the case, I bet there's a lot of common threads between all those posts." So I did that, and so I assembled it. I asked him if I could have the content and he was totally cool about it, even though he paid me to write for him. He said "Yeah, I think it will be good for you."



And of course, I didn't just slap it all together and then throw it up on Amazon. There's a lot of massaging and editing, and of course I added new sections. And while I was adding new sections, what I was doing is I was sharing these snippets on Facebook. And the snippets went from being 3 sentences to paragraphs to eventually 1,000 word daily updates.

Pat: Wow.

Srini: So, you know, what ended up happening is, so The Small Army Strategy. What was cool about giving so much of that book away for free on Facebook, was when the day came for the launch--I made it free for the first five days. I emailed all the people who had been following me on Facebook, the ones that were commenting on all of the snippets, I said "Hey, I just wanted to send you a free copy." So I sent out like 20 or 25 free copies and I said "If you like it--" I sent it out before the book came out. I said "If you like it, review it." And the thing is, it really struck a chord, which was cool. So I got 20 5-star reviews on the first day. That book probably got a 1000 copies. I'm sure it's surpassed 1000 copies. It has something like 88 5-star reviews on Amazon.

It's funny, right, because it's all self-published. I've seen traditionally published books that don't reach this level of success. But where it got interesting, I think, with the journey of the books is the next one where I decided to become very, very transparent.

For so long, I think I've been playing this game in my comfort zone, or with one foot outside my comfort zone and the other one still back there on the off chance that hey, maybe this whole thing will fall apart and I might have to even get a normal job. After a while, I realized that the ship had sailed for me to ever have a normal job, because, I mean, it'd been four years. I was like, it's pretty clear I'm committed to this path. I think it's time I stopped playing it safe and took some real risks.

For me, that risk was...true, honest, raw, vulnerable transparency in which I showcased all my flaws. I talked about the fact that I'd been fired from every job. I talked about the fact that I was 35 and lived at home. It was the most honest writing I'd ever done. And in that process I'd found my voice. I was doing it via Facebook, through these public status updates.

After a while, I was just getting a following on Facebook. And of course I knew that, you know, I wasn't going to forever just write endlessly cool updates. I had an end in mind. I just wasn't sure what that end was. I knew someday...I mean, on my 34th birthday, I think it was...sorry, 35th. Sometimes you forget!



Pat: Yeah, right? After 30 it doesn't really...

Srini: Yeah. So I wrote this post, titled *The Observations of a Life That Hasn't Gone According to Plan*, and it was really, really open. That ended up setting me loose, and from that point forward it was just like "Wow, this guy's really transparent."

But something happened. My writing changed, my voice changed, and of course I also got into the habit of [1000 words](#) a day, no matter what, because I was having to do so much writing for freelance gigs, for a startup I'm working on with Greg Hartle, and even my own writing. I was like "Okay, the only way I'm going to produce this much volume on a consistent basis that I actually have to commit to is by writing 1000 words a day" and that fundamentally changed my writing.

Now, I can't not do it. It's a habit. So what ended up happening, of course, is a lot of those essays--in the midst of this, because I did it all on Facebook, a woman named Carolyn [inaudible], who is the editor of all my books, found me and she offered to help me with the editing and really shape the arc [inaudible] of these books.

So, we did this most recent book, [The Art of Being Unmistakable](#): A Collection of Essays About Making a Dent in the Universe. Largely, it's a combination of self-help, my creative process, my views on why we have to be artists on the web as opposed to just entrepreneurs, which I really want to--that's the perspective I'd really love to talk to you about in more detail.

And so that book, I think the week it came out it sold 360 copies, and I was stoked. I was like "Okay, cool, it's not a thousand copies yet" but I thought thousand copies was the goal. And then one afternoon I was looking on it just to see the most recent reviews and a lot of my friends had written, and I saw it was #1 in Entrepreneurship. I was like "Oh, cool!" so I tweeted about it. Some guy replied back saying "Hey, you might want to thank Glenn Beck! He raved about your book on his show."

I was like "Okay." I'd heard of Glenn Beck. It was--keep in mind, I don't watch the news, and I have the pop culture taste of a teenage girl. Like, the pseudo-weird TV is my favorite source of television. So I was like, I replied back like "Well, Glenn Beck, huh? He's kind of a big deal isn't he?"



And so of course I go on to find out he's this veeeeery polarizing figure. When I shared on Twitter, some people are on Facebook and it was like "Yeah, it's kind of a double-edged sword, having Glenn Beck tout your books."

I went and looked and the numbers were skyrocketing on Amazon, so I ousted James Altucher from the #1 spot in the Entrepreneurship category, and I saw the units--my friend Angela said "I think you're not realising the magnitude of this. Go look at your Amazon dashboard and see how many books you've sold."

I was like "Oh my god! I sold 1,000 copies in one day!" And I'd set a goal a year ago to sell 1000 copies of a book. I had no idea how it was going to happen. And I was like--

Pat: 1000 copies in a DAY.

Srini: Yeah. It was pretty surreal.

Here's the thing, right? I set that goal--here's what I would say, is I think that outcomes are very arbitrary, and I think outcome based goals are actually dangerous. The truth is that the only part of that I controlled was writing 1000 words a day and shipping. I couldn't say that "Hey, I want to--" I couldn't say "Okay, I have to hit 1000 copies."

Yeah, I might have been able to manufacture it with some nonsense, but to authentically sell 1000 copies. That's largely out of my control. And this is something that I'm learning more and more is that so many of our goals are outcome based, and the problem with that is we don't [inaudible] behavior is something you control. So in a lot of ways we can kind of say--some people just throw them away and we should think a lot more, spend a lot more time concerning ourselves with behavior acquired to reach those goals than the actual goals themselves.

Pat: Yeah, love that.

Srini: Anyways, Glenn Beck found it. I emailed Glenn Beck and said "Hey, man, I'm the one that wrote that book. Thank you!" So regardless of what your politics are at this point, especially because I'm not political--my knowledge of politics goes to about all I know is who our current president is. Beyond that, I could care less. So I emailed him and I said "thank you."



I was like, you know what, here's a guy who's given me a very, very important moment. This guy just took my book into a best seller so how could you not be grateful for that, regardless of what his story is?

So I got an email from the producers of his show the next day and they said "Hey Srin, Glenn wants to have you come into the studio to be on the show, would be interested?"

I was like "Yeah, sure, why not?"

This is actually something worth mentioning. At this point, my knowledge of Glenn Beck was starting to increase because I was seeing how people were responding on Facebook. "Hey, this guy's a total blowhard Republican." All this kind of stuff. You know?

Because the thing is, you know, we all have opinions about celebrities and stuff. So I did a few Google searches and I made a very deliberate decision that I was going to not do any research. See the theme again? Mainly because what I found was actually pretty disturbing, and I thought "you know, I need to go in and I need to have a really genuine conversation with him, so I need to see him as a person, not a persona." Because what you don't realize is unlike you and me Pat, when somebody like Glenn speaks into a microphone, it has an echo. And his echo is much crazier than ours because 30 million people hear it.

And a lot of us say things that piss people off. But 30 million people don't hear everything we have to say, and it's like a game of telephone, so what happens is that echo gets mangled. He actually said somebody took something he said on air out of context and said he was an advocate of child abuse.

So you kind of realize that the media creates this mask, and it creates a persona, so I made a very deliberate decision. So I got to actually get to KNOW Glenn as a person. And truth is, Pat, despite the fact that he's Glenn Beck, what he does is not very different than what you or I do. He's a media creator and a media producer who's trying to get a message out to the world, it's just in a very different context.

And you know what? There's a lot to learn from that. He's been very successful. You can't argue with what he's learned. And the truth is, it's interesting, the most fascinating part of that day is when I sat in his office with him--he sat on one couch and I sat on the other--and he talked to me about life, he talked to me about success,



he talked to me about all the things he'd done wrong in his life, all the places he'd failed.

The funniest story I think he told me is that Michael Bubl  is a friend of his, and he said that Bubl  was somewhere mentioned that he and Glenn Beck were friends and somebody punched Michael Bubl  in the face! He got into a fist fight over the fact that he's friends with Glenn Beck!

Pat: Wow.

Srini: So, but, you know when he started talking about all these people, it was like "Wait a minute! These are all our heroes and role models. People we all look up to are friends of Glenn Beck!" Because then you realize, okay, the media creates a mask and it creates a persona so we can't always trust what we're seeing.

And you know what? Like I said, at the end of the day this guy gave me a career-defining moment. I mean, the book has gone on to sell ten thousand copies. I think it sold ten thousand copies that week, actually.

Pat: That's so awesome! I'm looking at the page right now, you know, mostly 5-star reviews, I'm looking at the #1 in Entrepreneurship, #1 in Creativity, #2 in books for Entrepreneurship, not just Kindle books, but ALL BOOKS. Amazing man, congrats!

Srini: Thanks, thanks. It got as high as #7 in the entire Kindle store the day I was on the show.

Here's one thing you think about, you know, you said mostly 5-star reviews. But if you look at the 1-star reviews, they're pretty brutal! But you know, one of my friends said "If you didn't get any 1-star reviews, you didn't say anything very bold."

You know, Justine Musk says that if you have, you know, a strong, bold point of view which is the most compelling kind, you're going to piss some people off. I definitely did, but the cool thing, Pat, I would say, has been the amount of emails I've received about how many people have found that book to be life-changing. Like [inaudible] saying "Hey, this is something, I don't know why, your words just spoke to me!" And, you know, there are people who are like "Oh, I'm going to buy 10 copies for my kids, this should be required reading for every college graduate."

Pat: That's so cool, man.



Srini: That's probably the most rewarding thing. And you know, what I would say to that is that you can't manufacture that. Kamal Ravikant is a friend of mine, and one of the speakers at [Instigator Experience](#). He said that "You know what, if you want people to share something, create something that connects with them."

Part of why I think people listen to you, Pat, is that, you know, despite your success, we see a very human side of you. You talk about your family, you talk about your kids, we actually see--and also, there's no gap between who you are online and who you are in-person, and I think that far too often, I've seen that with a lot of people.

Pat: Well, thank you. I appreciate that. And you know, I always try to be real in every aspect of my life, where I'm at, what I'm doing. And that's obviously coming from you, too. I mean, it's crazy how this all starting with just being honest and completely transparent on Facebook, and it turned into this book and just got found.

And like you said, you can't manufacture that. You can't force that to happen. It just sort of does happen over time.

Srini: Yeah. I would say one thing, I mean, it's worth noting the 1,000 words a day. I mean, that's--so much of this is about, like, let's say that I'd just written the book, and tried to put it out on Amazon, Glenn Beck found it. I think part of what made it resonate is that I spent a lot of time working on the craft element of this. I feel like this is overlooked by so many [inaudible]--

We were talking about interviewers earlier. Like, you have to approach all of this as a craft, and really you have to view yourself as an artist who is constantly refining your craft and really working on, you know, how do I get better at what I do? How do I outdo what I just did? Every interview, I try to think, you know--what keeps me up at night is how do you find more Meg Wordens? How do you find more AJ Leons?

I'm not interested in finding the next social media celebrity, I'm like "How do I find a story that touches people's hearts?" Because, you know, if you saw the recent Steve Jobs movie, at the very beginning, Ashton Kutcher's on the stage saying "This is the cool thing about the iPod is it's a tool for your heart. When you can touch somebody's heart, that's limitless." And I loved that. I was so inspired. And the movie SUCKS, but that's a whole 'nother story.



Pat: [laughs] You had mentioned becoming an artist, and I had sort of seen this in you, Srini, over the last few years and watching you progress and where you've come to now. I mean, your work is art now. Before you were doing interviews and getting people, you were doing blogs, and it was very entrepreneurial, and now you seem to be sort of an artist.

You mentioned you wanted to touch on that a little bit before we closed up here.

Srini: Yeah, here's the thing, Pat. The world is way noisier than it was when you and I started doing all of this, right? I think you started in 2008, I started in 2009. What stands out is people who are unique. People who have an artistic signature.

The problem is that we follow so many "best practices" and you know what, people like you and me are responsible for that, to some degree, because we provide all of this information. But I've said this over and over again. Don't just take the information we're giving you and try to follow it to the letter. Put your own spin on it, and adapt.

Because here's the thing, right? When you approach this like an artist, you will bring something to it that nobody else can create. You know what, I want to talk about the [Instigator Experience](#). Nobody else could conceive of the pure neuroticism that is going into this event.

If you saw my last Facebook status update, I said "Hey, does anybody know where I can get a school bus that--"

Pat: I saw that! I was like "What?????"

Srini: I said "I want to saw a school bus in half to set up the environment for one of the workshops that we have. I want to gut this school bus and make it one of the elements of the environment." Nobody else would come up with that, right? Because you know, I could say "Let's do the standard things." And I think being an artist is about looking at standards and asking yourself "How do I not only defy those standards, but--"

Seth Godin talks about this idea of overwhelming people with joy. Like, I want people's senses to be delighted by everything they do and every element of everything I do. I'll give you another example, I was at the post office yesterday, and we made posters. We started doing physical goods.



See, this is something that might be interesting to your listeners. Most of them probably have never thought "Oh, why not do a physical product that is like an artifact or a piece of work?" I had this blog post titled "15 Principals for Living a Creative Life." And one of my listeners said "Srini, this is beautiful! You should turn it into a poster!"

So I emailed my friend Sarah Steenland, who is an amazing illustrator, and said "What do you think?"

She said "Okay, cool, I'll get back to you with it." She sketched it out. We ordered a copy on Zazzle to see what it would look like. And now we have a poster for sale!

But you know, when I went into the post office, these poster tubes were in there and I was like "Wow, these things are hideous! Why are we mailing them in these? And the tape looks screwy. This whole processes should be beautiful! I want it to be like the unboxing of an Apple product!"

The real thing here is that what I would say is that we become victims of these best practices. And I think that we have to basically approach all of this as if we're working with a blank canvas and say "You know what, I've got all these tools, but why don't I combine things in a way that only I could, or in a way that nobody else does?" Take different, you know--

I mean, I think that I'm very blessed in that I've got so many different perspectives on all this. You know, I have people like you who really get how to really actually operationally make something work in a way that very few people do. And then I get an Eric Wahl who's a graffiti artist, right? Who gives me a very different perspective than you. And to me I think what my work has become about is combining all of those things. Combining all these ingredients to make dishes that only I could make. And that's, I think, really is--I think to me that's where your ability to tap into, you know, your own ability to be unmistakable lies.

Pat: Dude. I don't--I mean, that was awesome. I can't think of anything else to say beyond that. That's the perfect way to close up. So, Srini, thank you so much for that, for all the inspiration. Congratulations on all of your success. I wish you the best of luck with the Instigator Experience. I know I'm going to be hearing a lot about it once its' over, and hopefully we can have a chance if it's not sold out already by the time people check this out to come back and do it again next year if it's something you choose to again.



Srini: Yeah.

Pat: Where should we go to get more information from you?

Srini: As you mentioned, for the event, theinstigatorexperience.com will be all the information for that will be there.

BlogCast FM you can find in iTunes. I mean, if you look in the what's hot section for Management & Marketing, I think you and I are always there in that top panel. So you can either subscribe to us in iTunes or visit us at blogcastfm.com.

Pat: Awesome. And just as a--you know, we had mentioned this before. Actually for those of you listening this is the second time we've recorded this because the first time the quality of the audio wasn't good and Srini and I were both sort of--we got to put the best quality stuff out there. We were happy to do this again. And I think it went--actually, not to say--

Srini: Actually, I think it's a lot better.

Pat: Yeah!

Srini: Sounded more eloquent as far as I'm concerned!

Pat: It did! and that's not to say the first time was terrible but, I mean, I think--we talked about a lot of the same things but it went really, really well and I think also that I just--as far as what we did there, we wanted to always demonstrate, we always provide the best for our audience. WE weren't going to compromise audio quality and what actually was happening was one of our sounds was just going out every minute, and it was just really annoying.

So thank you again for coming on and agreeing to do this again with me. Congratulations on all of your success Srini! You had mentioned the last time--and I want to make sure we do this in case people listen to this in the future--there's going to be a little bit of a rebranding with BlogCast FM.

Srini: Oh! Yeah, yeah. We're changing the name of the show. And as I just told you, I can't tell you just yet. It's still a process. It'll be done by January. But we just realized the truth is that our show is not about blogging. It's about being creative. It touches so many elements on life and creativity and art and business.



You know, we're really a show designed for creative entrepreneurs. The thing is that--we've outgrown the brand [BlogCast FM](#) and really we want a brand that we can grow into and do other things with. So that's around the corner, so keep an eye out for that.

You know, changing the name of a show on iTunes is something that I'm not looking forward to personally! But--mainly because Apple is the Bermuda Triangle of information. But yeah, that's coming. It's right around the corner.

Pat: Cool man, well we'll all look forward to that. I'll make sure to change any sort of links in the show notes when that does happen because I want to make sure--

Srini: Yeah, and we'll have redirects set up for all that so it should all work fine.

Pat: Awesome, buddy. Thank you so much for coming on and spending time with me today and time with the SPI audience. I know we all appreciate you and everything you're doing. All the best of luck and we'll talk to you at a later time.

Srini: All right, sounds great. Thank you for having me, Pat.

Pat: Thanks.

Alright, I hope you enjoyed that interview with Srini from BlogCast FM. You can look up BlogCast FM in iTunes and subscribe to his show or also go to [BlogCastFM.com](#) to see what else he's got going on there. A lot of great things, inspiring things. Just got--you know, I've been following Srini for a very long time. Just to see his transformation is incredible. So I'm really, really happy for him and I hope you're inspired by the work he's doing and how creative he's been and how he's putting art into his entrepreneurship. I feel like a lot of us can benefit from doing the same thing and being creative with the work that we do to serve our audiences.

If you'd like to get the show notes for this episode, there's a lot of resources that Srini mentioned, a lot of links to previous episodes and resources and things like that, you can go to [smartpassiveincome.com/session88](#). Again, that's [smartpassiveincome.com/88](#). You can get all that good stuff there.

If you haven't checked out the site in a while you might want to visit because it's brand new! It was redesigned a week ago and we are still making changes to it, my developer and I, and we're constantly testing and using heat maps to see what's working and



what's not. There will be a very detailed post coming up soon if not already on the blog about the design changes and why things are the way theory are and what's working what's not what didn't work before and why we made certain changes and all that good stuff.

Stay tuned for the next episode, session 87, because we're going to have Gary Vaynerchuk on the show. We're going to be talking about his new book Jab Jab Jab Right Hook, a lot of the things I'm doing wrong in social media that I can improve on, and just--

You know, Gary's a cool guy. Like, first time I spoke to him. I already have the interview done, and he's just super cool. A lot of great stuff. He was one of the original people who had inspired me with his book Crush It, and I have to say this book--to me this book is a different kind of book but it blows it out of the water.

Anyway, I'll see you in epsidoe 89 with Gary Vanerchuk. Hope you enjoy that, but I hope you enjoy this show as well: smartpassiveincome.com/session88.

Thank you so much, I appreciate you. If you have time to leave a review on iTunes you are awesome. If not, maybe next time. Thank you so much, keep pushing forward, keep making things happen. Love you guys, thanks. Buy.

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