



## Episode 5: What My Hair Site Taught Me About Starting a Niche Website

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Hey everybody, what's up! Welcome to episode number 5 of my podcast. Today I'm going to be talking about standing out in a niche, and I'm specifically going to focus more on getting started, because I've learned that the reason some people struggle, actually a lot of people struggle online is they start incorrectly.

Some of you are doomed even before you create that first blog post or that first web page. Also, I've noticed that a lot of beginners feel overwhelmed when they start. They don't have any direction, they don't understand how this all works or where they should start, so I'm really going to address that in this podcast.

Finally, those of you who have started, you may be wondering, why am I not having success? So hopefully you'll hear some things in this podcast that'll make you go, "Oh that makes sense. Maybe I should have done that or maybe I'll start over in this area or try this differently."

Now I'm going to start this podcast with a personal story and I'm

going to apologize in advance to the gentlemen listening,☺ because a lot of you probably could care less about my hair story. But it is relevant to this whole website creation and niche selection process, so I'll try to keep it short and to the point.

If you follow my YouTube channel, you probably have noticed that my hair has changed quite a bit in the last 5 years. I had what women call a 'relaxer' on my hair, which straightens the hair. It's a chemical a lot of Black women use; actually not just Black women, women who have textured hair who want to make it straight. Through the years, my hair began thinning and thinning and thinning and it was not as long and thick as it was when I was a little girl.

Well in 2009, everything came to a head. My hair was thinning so badly, and I actually had a thyroid problem that was just making the problem worse. I didn't know this at the time, but my hair was thinning at an even faster rate. In some of my videos, I was actually wearing a wig because I had lost a lot of the fullness of my hair. I had the length but I didn't have the fullness.

So I had what they call a 'Come to Jesus' meeting with myself and I said, "Okay Lisa, you're either going to have to wear a wig for the rest of your life, or you're going to have to stop relaxing your hair and go natural." Let me be straight up with you. That terrified me. It absolutely terrified me, because we live in a world where straight hair is deemed as beautiful, and kinky hair, not so much. Now, it's a different time now but when I was growing up as a little girl, I never saw examples of women wearing their natural hair that were praised for their hair. It was always like, "Oh you need to comb your hair or you need to do something to your hair."

But I look back on that now and it kinda saddens me because that's how my hair grows out of my head. It's really a shame that society teaches us that there is only one kind of beauty, and I know for me, that really impacted my self-esteem and I had zero confidence about rocking my own natural hair. Now before I go any further, I need to say this. This is my story. This is not every 'Black woman with a relaxer's' story. Not everyone hates their hair or has damage. Some people go through their entire life with a relaxer and never

have any issues, so I felt like I had to say that because a lot of women wear relaxers for different reasons and that's their own business.

So I began researching videos on YouTube of women who were going natural or who are already natural. I was like, "Wow this is such a process." What you should know is that in order to go natural, usually you have to chop a lot of your hair off because as your curly hair grows out, it meets up with the straight hair, and that point in the middle can be very delicate and your hair can break off a lot. A lot of people suggest just letting it grow out a little bit and then cut off the relaxed hair.

Okay, I'm already afraid to go natural, right. So now you're telling me I've got to go natural and I have to cut all my hair off? No way. So I decided that I was just going to let my hair grow out but I was not going to cut it off, which I knew was going to make the process extremely difficult, and I decided that I was going to document everything on my website. So now we're getting into the website stuff.

One thing I noticed online is that there were a lot of YouTube videos with women going natural and offering tips, but I didn't see anyone who documented the entire process from start to finish. So I figured that would be my angle, that would be my approach, and that's my first tip of the podcast. If you're going to go into a topic or niche that is trending or saturated and you can't find a way to really narrow it down even more, the key is to find an angle that no one is using or has used, to make yourself stand out. That's what I did. I saw that no one had really documented the entire journey and had not really created a website that focused on the journey as much as I was going to. I took advantage of that and that was my unique approach.

So in the beginning, the only thing I did was I added content to my site and I started creating YouTube videos. That's my second tip. When people start websites today ... first of all my heart goes out to all of my newbies out there who are just starting, because I can imagine how incredibly overwhelming all of this is. There is so much

information thrown at you. You've got so many social media networks that are out there, from Facebook to Twitter to Pinterest to Vine, you name it. It's just so much out there and sometimes it can be very difficult trying to figure out where to start.

What I always tell people is to choose one site in the beginning and focus on that, because if you try to choose too many and be popular on many different networks, you're going to overwhelm yourself. It's much better to spend 100% of your time on one network, than 25% of your time on 4 different networks, and have mediocre or less than mediocre success when you could be dominating one network.

When you start your website, you've got to have focus, you've got to have a plan today. It's so different from when I started, because back then it was just about a website. It was about a website and maybe you had an email list, and that was it. But today it's so different, so it's very, very important I think in the beginning, for you to simply choose one network and start there.

So how do you choose which site that you should use or what platform you should use to start promoting your site on? I always say, start with the one that you feel is the most relevant for your niche. For example, if you're doing something physical like you're teaching people how to repair something or you've got a home improvement site, obviously YouTube would be a great platform because you can do videos. If you're doing a site on self help or self improvement, podcasting may be a great vehicle for you, because a lot of people who listen to that type of information do it through podcasts.

Another thing I suggest is, know your strengths, know your talents and know your weaknesses, and then use the platform that aligns directly with your strengths. Here's an example. I am not a social media strategist. I won't be writing any books anytime soon, that will teach you how to sell 10,000 copies of your e-book on Twitter. It's just not going to happen. I tend to do better with teaching type styles, so that's why I tend to rely on YouTube and my blog for teaching, because that's where my strengths lie.

There's always a lot of talk online about why certain websites are successful over others, and people might name things like, oh the timing, the topic, the passion, the hard work. All those things are ingredients, but the other thing that I think often gets missed is choosing strategies that fit your talents. I often get emails from people who will say something like, "Lisa, I want to make money online with my blog, I want to make money with AdSense or whatever, but I hate writing or I'm a terrible writer. Can you please help me?"

Well, my first response is always, "You'll need to learn how to become a better writer if you really want a blog." Success online is not just about volume. It's not about just putting out as many YouTube videos as you can or as many blog posts as you can. Back in 2004, it was about that. If you knew Search Engine Optimization or you knew how to rank a webpage, it didn't really matter as much if you were a talented writer, because you could rank in Google quite easily. But today it's a different story. Google makes you prove you're popular, by the number of back links that you earn, by how many social media shares or content receives. So it's a little bit harder these days to fake it till you make it, if you know what I mean.

So it's not just about volume, it's about aligning your skill sets and your talents with whatever method you're going to use to promote your site. If you notice, there's a theme to my site. It's always a teaching type of theme, because that's where I tend to excel. You have to figure out what you're good at, and I guarantee it's something. Sometimes it's a little bit tricky to figure out how to align your skill sets to your website and promoting it and all that, but it's there. Sometimes you just have to dig deep.

Here's an example. Let's say you want to build a website on weight loss. You don't really want to narrow the topic down to anything specific. You just want to be in the weight loss space, because a lot of people I find, they don't want to narrow the site down. They just want to focus on the whole topic, and that's fine. There's no golden rule for how you have to start a website, but if you're going to do that, it's so important for you to have an angle.

So let's say your skill is engaging people. You have a very friendly, bubbly personality and people just really enjoy listening and talking to you. One of the things you could do is record yourself over a series of, let's just say 2 months, as you begin your weight loss plan. Every day you talk to the camera, you tell people what you're doing, what you're eating, and you can make it fun or funny. You can create like a montage of the videos and pictures and put them all together in a fun way, or way that's very interesting to watch and upload it to YouTube. That's an example of using your individual unique skill set to draw people in, and then from YouTube, you link the videos back to your site or you encourage people to go back to your website to sign up for your email list.

When I started with my hair site, the only thing I did was focus on YouTube and my blog. I would use my blog to promote my YouTube channel and I would use my YouTube channel to then promote my blog, so it was this back and forth thing. After the first year, I think I had something like 3,000 subscribers on YouTube and I was starting to get more and more traffic to my site, and Google started to notice my site as well.

Now what a lot of people would do today with the weight loss example is, they would buy a domain, they would write a bunch of weight loss content and they would sit back and wonder, "How come Google is not ranking my site?" Well, because Google has changed a lot in the last several years. Brands have a much bigger advantage than non-brands or new sites or personal sites. If you want to rank your site, you're going to have to earn links. Links are still the anchor of Search Engine Optimization. It's about getting quality links, relevant links that point to your website, to help you rank for the keywords that you're targeting.

So if you want to rank for various weight loss keywords, you're going to have to earn links from sites that are also about weight loss, and the more influential those sites are, the more that they'll help you. Now this can be very challenging for people today because, for example weight loss is a very broad example, because it's such a broad topic. That's why I'm always recommending that people

narrow down their topic to something much more specific. But as I said earlier, if you want to get into a more broad, competitive space, that's why you've got to have that angle. That's when you have to do something different like YouTube or with social media, so you're not relying on Google.

I'm certainly not against targeting search engine traffic because it still is a great way to get a lot of targeted visitors to your website. All I'm saying is that times have changed and you just can't sit back and write a hundred pages and then wait for Google to rank you, like you could years ago. Now if you want to chase backlinks, if you want to learn some of those black hat Search Engine Optimization techniques, this isn't the place. Sorry, I don't teach that. I don't know much about that. That's not really what my brand's about, but there are other sites out there that do teach that, and I don't recommend that because search engine traffic can be very unstable. You might rank well one day and then not rank as well the next day or the next month.

Now if you want to learn more about how Google works, how they value links, Moz put out a really, really great article about a month ago, and it's actually a PDF that you can download, and I will link that PDF from the show notes. If you go to [2createawebsite.com/podcast5](https://2createawebsite.com/podcast5), you'll be able to download the guide.

So let's recap what we've talked about here. First things first. If you're starting a new website and especially if you're going into a competitive topic, it is incredibly important for you to have an angle. So many people just build a website with mediocre content, and think that's going to be enough. Not anymore. You want to have an angle and then you want to pick one; two at the most but I still recommend one network or one method of promoting your site and send people back to your website, so you can collect their email address. So that could be YouTube. The key is you just want to drive people back to your website. Same thing with Twitter, same thing with Facebook, whatever you decide to use but don't kill yourself trying to be everywhere at once in the beginning.

Wade Harman of WadeHarman.com did an interview a while back with Jay Baer, and Jay Baer is a pretty well-known marketer, speaker, keynote speaker, and he said something that really resonated with me in the interview. He talked about how we as bloggers, marketers, we feel this pressure to be everywhere, on every network. He said he honestly wishes he could just stop using the majority of them and just focus on one, but he admitted and these are his words that, he just doesn't have the balls to do it.

I can sort of relate to that. Sometimes I do think "Gosh, I wish I could just delete my Facebook account and just focus on YouTube" or whatever, because you do sometimes feel like you have to be everywhere. And I think you can be everywhere. The key is, can you be effective everywhere? And I think that's where a lot of people struggle. So that's why I'm saying in the beginning, start with one and don't feel that you have to master every network.

Now when it comes to ranking your site in Google, I definitely think you should learn the basics. You just can't depend on the traffic like you once could. What you will learn, is the more creative you are, the better you do with your angle or your approach, you'll learn that people will link to you voluntarily. You will earn those links, you won't have to chase them.

Every time I log in to my hair website's stats, I always see a new link from another hair blog, and I must admit that's something that's really common in the natural hair space. People are generally very generous and I do understand that that may not be the case with every kind of niche, but still. When you are creative, when you're unique, when you have your own angle, it is more likely that you will earn those links and you don't have to wonder, "How do I get back links, how do I get people to link to my site?" When you make an impact, trust me, people will link to you.

That's why I tend to choose topics that I have personal involvement with. I know a lot of people can build websites on all kinds of different topics and they don't care if they don't have much experience with it. I just can't do that. I'm not as creative, I get bored and then I tend to give up really easily.



Prime example, you may remember that anonymous experiment site that I did. Gosh, it's been little over a year now. Well, I got so incredibly bored with the site that I just stopped updating it, and if you were on my email list, you may remember that e-book that I gave you. It talked about the traffic that it got in the first 6 months and it was up to 600 visits a day. Well, it's still getting traffic, but it's now down to 500 visitors a day because I haven't updated the site since March. Why haven't I updated the site? Because I'm bored, it's not something that I'm really interested in.

For those of you who are wondering why the site is anonymous, the reason I did that is I wanted to see how difficult it would be to rank a site in today's times, after all the Google updates, without having any ties to my name or any of my accounts, so there was no trail, no author rank or anything that would help that site. So I wanted to see how that would work today and that's why I did it, but I decided to keep it because it is making some money, \$50-\$60 bucks a month with Amazon. It's a nice little experiment site to keep around, but I'm just bored.

So for me, it has to be something that I'm very interested in and it has to be something that I'm constantly involved in on a day to day or at least a month to month basis. Otherwise, I won't have anything useful to say about it, and I'm not one of those people who can fake it till I make it. I think with all the changes that Google has made, it's harder to fake it till you make it. But as I said, if you want to learn how to manipulate Google and do all that black hat stuff and chase backlinks, you can. Some people get a kick out of that, but it's just not my thing. I think it's a temporary solution and I think it's much better to build a following in many different ways such as social media or YouTube or podcasting, or whatever floats your boat, and then you just treat any Google traffic that you get as a bonus.

The other thing that helps too is when you have an emotional connection with your audience and I think that's what was really helpful for my hair site. You know I told that story in the beginning about the things that I struggled with. Well, there were a lot of

women that struggled with the same things that I did when they were going natural, so instantly that site made a connection with them. I wouldn't have been able to make that connection if I had just been writing about that and had not experienced that. So, when you can make an emotional connection with your audience, I think that's another huge advantage, and it's why I like to choose topics that I'm personally involved with.

So my M.O.P. or my moral of the podcast for the day is, success is not just about luck and timing and topic. It's also about finding your strengths, and aligning those strengths with the methods you use to create and promote your site. Don't try to build your business on somebody else's skill set. You have your own set of skills, your own talents. Find out what they are and use that to foster and build your business.

YouTube is not for everybody, podcasting is not for everybody, social media is not for everybody. Find out where you excel and go there, and I guarantee you the journey will be much more rewarding and it'll be less stressful.

And just in case you were wondering, I absolutely love my natural hair now and I couldn't care less what people think. It really was not just a physical journey for me but a personal journey, and I learned a lot about myself through that, so I had to put that out there in case you were wondering. 😊

Anyway guys, thanks for listening. Check out the show notes for this podcast at [2createawebsite.com/podcast5](https://2createawebsite.com/podcast5). If you have any questions, I'll be more than happy to answer them for you. If you need hosting for your site, you need help starting your site, you know you can go to [websitepalace.com](https://websitepalace.com). That's my site and you will get a free video to help you get started.

I'm really grateful you took the time out of your day to listen to me because hey, you didn't have to, right? So I appreciate you and I will talk to you on the 15th of next month. Peace.