



From Plan to Podcast



An offbeat
method for
starting
your first
show



A note from Ginni Saraswati

I started my career as a radio DJ, so podcasting was always going to come calling. Sure enough, five years ago and craving to get back into audio, I started *The Ginni Show*.

It was ‘out-there’ and funny, and I thought of it as an extension of my personality. It really did grow with me. It evolved from being a personal journal to an interview series to a medley of morning check-ins and motivational tips. Wherever it went, my main aim was to make sure that I looked forward **every week** to making it happen.

And I did. And yet life happened, too!

Shortly after launching my podcast, I started to think it would be great to have more help. A writer, designer, videographer... Enter Ginni Media, a side hustle that started in Melbourne and became a full-time media agency in New York. The more my business grew, the more I let *The Ginni Show* slide.

But see, once the podcasting bug gets you, it **gets you**. I just had to fire it up again. I wasn't whole without it!

Now, I'm blessed to have my Ginni Media team. And really, they've helped me bounce around ideas and draft a beautiful concept that feels like **me**.

But it's not just about having people behind you. Sometimes it's about confidence, or having the right tools, or having a guide like this one, to get the ideas flowing and the mindset to make it happen.

That's why we created this book. Anyone who wants to start a podcast – even those who might have already produced a few episodes, will find something useful on these pages.

So, my friends, this is your moment.

Ginni xo

Coming up...

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Introduction

Why we feel podcasting can be so much fun, and just how much producing your own series can pay off.

3

Ideas and Format

Generate a solid podcast concept, and find a format that suits you.

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Publication

Everything you need to launch your podcast onto the internet

Equipment & Time

The bare bones podcast setup and a time-driven guide to producing each show.

Podcast Quiz

Your true personality. Take it really seriously!



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Do you really, really want this?

We've got to be honest. A podcast is a commitment!

A really fun, really challenging, really rewarding commitment...

but one that can demand a major chunk of your precious time and brain power.

Think of it like training a puppy. It's exciting, it's playful, and when it succeeds you get serious bragging rights. But it's also a little messy and time consuming, and it will almost definitely wake you up in the middle of the night.

It's those jumping-into-the-blue moments, where you're never quite sure what's going to happen, that makes podcasting such an exciting form of self expression.

What goes into a podcast, anyway?

At its simplest, a podcast episode can be just a voice talking. There are about a million more bells and whistles you can add, but if you really wanted to you could, right now, from the comfort of your own laptop, record yourself and upload the first episode of *A Puppy's Guide to Poop and Play*. Now, we're not saying it would be any good (we love you and want what's best for you!) but the opportunity absolutely exists.

Yes, podcasting has grown. Yes, competition is fierce. The events of 2020 saw most of us spending a good deal more time at home than we were used to. Almost one third of all podcasts in existence were started in the first half of that year alone (insideradio.com, 2020). That figure shouldn't deter you from starting your own show. It just means that there are so many more people out there who are aware of podcasting as a form of entertainment. Think of every podcaster as another potential listener.

It's exciting, it's playful, and when it succeeds you get serious bragging rights.

Support exactly when you need it

Decisions are always made easier when we break them down into their elements. Just like when you have to bring in a trainer for a particularly stubborn pup, a mentor or even moral support can be helpful when beginning your journey to podcast greatness. After all the time and energy you've invested, you want your hard work to reach its maximum potential!

On the next pages, we'll give you all the details to help you figure out how you can get started in podcasting on the right foot and before you make any serious investments.

Podcasting, and why we dig it



Fashion is cyclical (we're talking to you, Gen Z, with your '90s butterfly clips and tiny sunglasses!)

Here's the thing.

Entertainment comes around and goes around, too.

Think back. Before-you-were-born back, to the stuff your grandparents and great-grandparents enjoyed before there was a TV in every home. Picture it: Ma knitting by the fire, Pa puffing on his pipe, and little Sammy and Billie on the floor playing jacks. What's the tie that binds them?

The giant Victrola radio, broadcasting the latest serial mystery. Everyone is rapt.

Maybe in the 21st century we're not all sitting in the gloom, breathing in Pa's acrid pipe smoke. We're on the go. Ma is no longer finishing her knitting. She's commuting by train into the city and getting a dose of morning mindfulness through her airpods. Pa's blasting his favorite

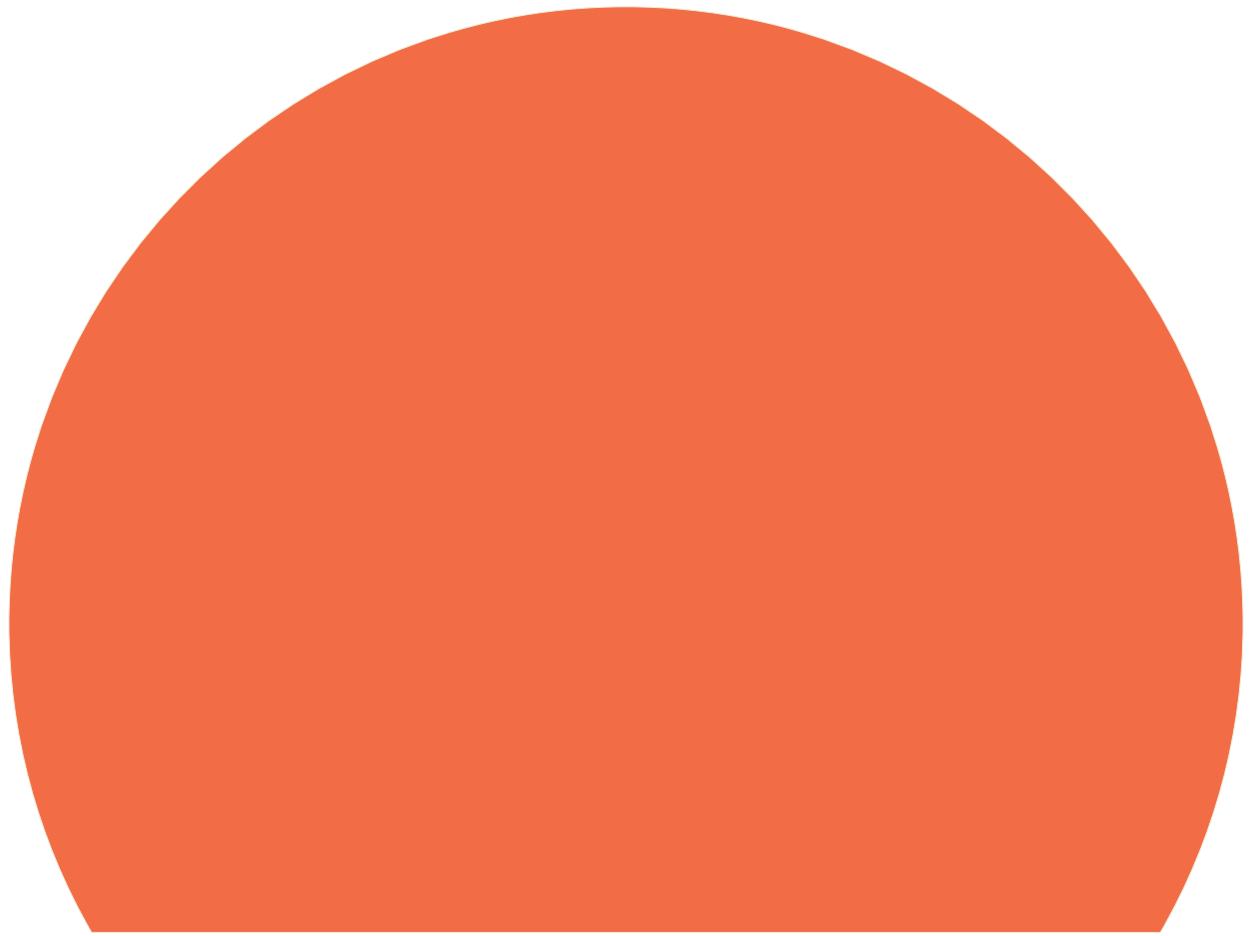
straight-talking podcaster while he changes the brakes on the family car. Sammy's listening to an interview with the new TikTok star while he finishes his homework, and Billie downloads gaming tips from her favorite Twitch streamer on her walk home from school.

Audio has been around for a long time. And though podcasting is a relatively recent form of entertainment, we think the industry has always been moving in this direction. What other media lets you enjoy it no matter where you are or what you're doing? What other form completely immerses you in an environment? Podcasting is rated the most immersive form of entertainment; it has been backed up by research (Entercom 2020)!

Audio. You dark horse. While the internet went increasingly visual and everyone seemed to be hungry for more images and more video, you were always in the shadows, just waiting to take back the throne.

How podcasting dethrones other forms of entertainment

- 1. They're convenient.** Even the busiest people can listen while they get on with their day.
- 2. They're accessible.** As long as you have a streaming device and internet access, you've got podcasts!
- 3. They're intimate.** Yep. We're talking straight-into-your-earholes entertainment.
- 4. There's a lot of content.** Seriously, there are millions of podcasts available to stream. There's truly a show for every imaginable taste.
- 5. They're ready in a snap.** Production times can be much, much speedier than video.
- 6. They're egalitarian.** Have we mentioned that anyone with a smartphone and wifi can start their own show?



An ideas generator for your first podcast

Are you an expert in the history and practice of sea shanties? Do you love travelling to remote villages in Northern Europe or cosplaying as a superhero or cooking infinite variations of vegan paella? Have you found a calling in helping others through mindfulness or meditation or worship?

If nothing jumps out at you right away, try the following...

The generation game



And, after point 6...

Your options are quite literally endless... but don't let them overwhelm you. Once you've made your shortlist, ask yourself these questions: Is your subject something you're passionate about? Is it something you feel comfortable speaking about on the reg, or at the very least a subject you can learn to become comfortable speaking about?

If you still can't make up your mind, remember that there are plenty of podcasts that have subtly (and not so subtly) tweaked their subject as they progressed.

You're not locked in to your first choice forever. Heck, you're not even technically locked in to the first name you pick! If you do a few episodes and realize you're

bored or you hate it, you're totally free to make any changes you want!

The most important thing is that you're learning, having fun, and enjoying the process.

Choosing your FORMAT

How are you going to tell your story to the world? Will you invite guests? Will you do all the research and heavy lifting by yourself?

Whatever you decide, make sure your choice ends up a podcast that you'll **want** to keep working at.

This bit goes here,

Much like the subject you choose to cover, your format is going to be fully dependent on your personal preference and how you feel most comfortable.

Keep in mind: We'll never tell you to simply ape another show; it's not authentic and it's also not necessary. If there's a show whose subject you're wild about and another whose format you think would work perfectly with your tone, consider how you might marry the two.

Find out what they don't do.

Think about the strengths and weaknesses. Maybe the true crime podcast you're obsessed with has fantastic banter in the front half, but you just don't think you could talk on that subject week after week. That's fine! What about that fascinating science Q&A podcast you love but always thought came off a little dry? Why not combine elements?

Blended formats aren't

unusual. Radio Rental utilizes a fictional framing device to bookend (nonfiction) listener letters. *Scam Goddess* uses interview and scripting to create a unique listener experience. Shows like *My Favorite Murder* and *How Did This Get Made* even change formats between their regular episodes and "minisodes" (separate, shorter episodes) with listener write-ins.

On the next page you'll find three of the most popular podcasting formats.

and that bit goes there...

Podcasts, three ways



THE INTERVIEW

What it is

One (or more) hosts talking to one (or more) guest(s). This **could** be a traditional Q&A but it doesn't have to be.

THE SCRIPTED READ

Storyline read by host, sometimes combined with interviews. Choose this if you're not totally comfortable with off-the-cuff speaking. Of course, even if you **do** script your show, you're still allowed to go off-topic or improvise, should the mood strike.

THE WORK OF FICTION

Remember that old-timey family scene we sketched out on Page 3? Those early radio dramas are the precursor to fiction podcasts. Little bit audiobook, little bit TV show, fiction podcasts are a way to flex your creative muscle and voicework.

Give it an edge

Many popular podcasts are moving further away from a straight question-and-answer format to a conversational tone. There's still opportunity to ask planned questions, but think more "great first date" vs "awkward job interview."

Think about the whole mood of the episode. Can you add sound or music elements to amplify the experience for the listener?

This format is a way to get creative in more ways than one. Make use of binaural sound, to help listeners immerse themselves in your protagonist's experience. Get your TV writer's cap on and think about the entire show, beginning to end. How can you end each episode on a cliffhanger?

Great examples

Becoming Your Best, **The Truth Prescription**, and **Conan O'Brien Needs a Friend**. Each host has a very different style of interacting with their guests.

The Dollop, **Love Without Borders**, and **Hidden Brain** all utilize scripts to tell their stories, with varying levels of improv.

Blood Ties, **Alice isn't Dead**, and **36 Questions**.

Who's your dream dinner party guest?

Leave them in your fantasies. It's unlikely you'll get them to be on your podcast. Not on the first try, anyway.

If we had a cent for every time someone told us they wanted to invite Oprah... we'd have enough money to invite Oprah.

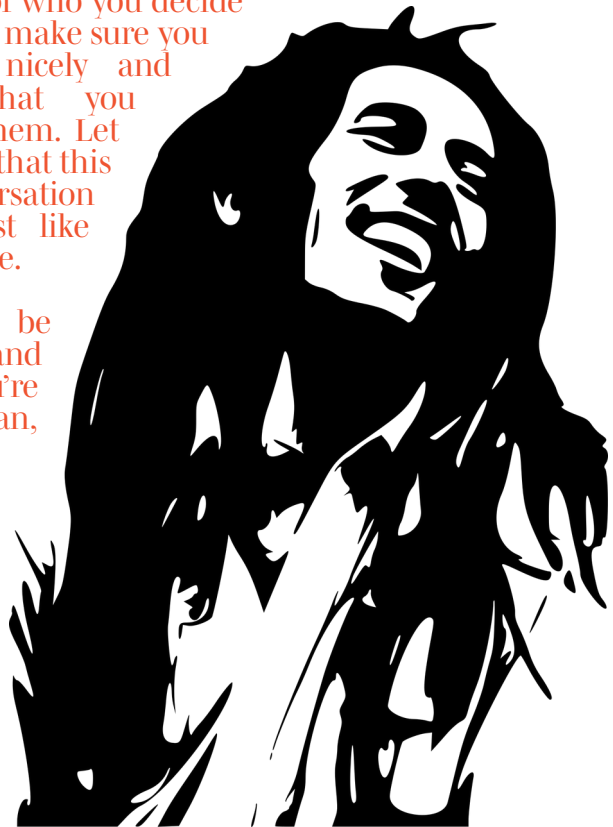
Your first guest probably isn't going to be a huge, marquee name. And that is **totally okay**.

Some of the most fascinating podcast interviews out there are with people you've never even heard of! Maybe your pie-in-the-sky dream is to interview Mindy Kaling (hey, us too!) but we can bet that one of the professors at your local university would also make a thoughtful guest. Don't be afraid to reach out; the worst that can happen is that someone says no.

Keep in mind: it's not about the **name**, it's about the **conversation**.

Regardless of who you decide to interview, make sure you ask them nicely and explain what you expect of them. Let them know that this is a conversation and it's just like having coffee.

Above all, be open and honest. You're both human, after all!



Where to find great interview guests who aren't major

Open a book.

Who's publishing in your genre or field of interest? Are there any authors who stand out? Is there someone who seems to appear frequently in your searches? Drop them an email! They may be glad to have some publicity.

Trawl your feed.

Hey, social media has its perks, right? Is there someone you admire on Instagram or TikTok who you think would be a perfect fit for your subject?

Look in the internet's nooks.

IG, Tiktok and YouTube are the obvious venues, but there are interesting and knowledgeable personalities on less-mined platforms like Twitch and Clubhouse, too.

Don't discount Uncle Derek.

Really. Ask friends and family. You know them; they know you. And if you're an unpractised interviewer, you can do away with the awkward getting-to-know-you stuff at the beginning and cut straight to the gold.

Equipment and time

The background is an abstract composition of geometric shapes. At the top is a dark teal rectangle. Below it is a large orange shape that tapers to the right. To the left of the orange shape are several vertical stripes of alternating yellow and dark blue. The bottom right corner is a yellow triangle. The text 'Equipment and time' is in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font, positioned in the teal area. The text 'When to save and when to invest' is in a smaller, yellow, sans-serif font, positioned in the orange area.

When to save
and when to invest

Hey, big spender...

You're spending your hard-earned time and energy on your podcast, so you should invest in a few things to make it sound great.

Yes, you could totally record your show using the audio equipment that came with your laptop, but we promise your finished product will not live up to your efforts.

Remember, podcasting is an **intimate listening experience.**

There's little room for poor quality audio when you're sending sound directly into someone's earholes!

Still, that doesn't mean you have to break your budget before you even get started. For a \$200-\$300 investment, you can get a decent setup that will sound great.

buh
duh
du-duhh

Podcasting is an intimate listening experience. There's little room for poor quality audio.



Microphones under \$150

Blue Snowball USB* \$39.99-\$70

This is the cheapest option on our list, but it still produces very good quality sound. No software required makes for easy set-up. Mac and PC compatible.

Blue Yeti* \$100-\$130

Capable of connecting directly to any iOS device through Apple MFi. Well known, professional brand. Great quality sound. Mac and PC compatible.

AT2100 USB/XLR* \$110

Produces great quality sound, portable, easy to use, and easy to position on desktop. XLR option also available. Mac and PC compatible.

* These are affiliate links

These mics all get
our Audio Director's
seal of approval!



Annnnnnd... action!

Remote recording on the cheap

If you're recording your interview remotely, you have several bargainacious options.

One is to use Audacity, which gets a mention on Page 13. It's free and easy to use, and there are a bunch of tutorials online. If that doesn't float your boat, here are our recording picks:

Audio only Zencastr

Records your audio and your guest's audio in separate tracks.

At time of writing, Zencastr offers unlimited recording time and number of guests through their free version. Operates using Chrome or Firefox.

Audio & Video Zoom

You may be familiar with this one... Zoom records yours and your guest's audio in separate tracks.

Their free version offers up to 40 minutes of meetings. If you want more time, their yearly and monthly subscriptions offer recordings of up to 30 hours at once. Available on your browser or as a separate app.

Video? I thought we were all about sound?

Some podcasters like to utilize video recordings to market and promote their episodes. Closed-caption videos of your podcast are also a great way to make your productions inclusive for those who are hearing-impaired!

How to prompt your interviewees

In a perfect world, we'd be able to record every interview in the same room as our subject. It would be a cinch to control audio quality, equipment, environment, and internet connection. If there's anything that 2020 has taught us, though, it's that almost any work can be done remotely.

This includes podcast interviews.

Things will be a little trickier in a remote setting, but here are some tips you can give your guests before the recording:

Where will you be recording?

Make sure you're in a quiet room. The less background noise, the better your recording will be.

Please wear headphones!

They're essential for both of you to hear yourselves clearly and avoid feedback. The brand of headphones doesn't matter. Earpods are fine.

Have you got a decent internet connection?

To avoid skipping, static, and issues with clarity, a strong connection is extremely important.

Use an external mic if you have one.

It's not always possible, but if your guest has an external mic (or really, anything that isn't the internal mic on their computer) so much the better.

We made a video to help you soundproof your room on a budget!

Not that kind of tick-tock

There are no hard-and-fast rules for how much time you should be spending on podcasting. And the final run-time of successful shows can run anywhere from five minutes to upwards of an hour. However long you want your finished product to be, the finished length of your episode won't be anywhere near what you've actually recorded.

Here's our Ginni Media guide to how long an average interview episode might take. Set your stopwatches...now!

00:00 Planning.

You don't have to script every word you're going to say, but some hosts do prefer it. Even if you're not planning to write a formal script, it's a good idea to have an outline of key topics. Of course, you're also free to improvise, but keep in mind that being a good interviewer takes skill, and planning ahead might be worth the investment.

Give yourself a few hours, especially when drafting your first few episodes, preferably more depending on your style. The process should take up to three hours per interviewee and around two hours if you're recording an episode solo.

04:00 Recording time.

For interviews, allow yourself up to one and a half hours for recording time. This will allow for any technical setups and troubleshooting as well

Before your first episode is complete, you'll also need to design your intro and outro, which will need a few hours of planning and scripting!

as let you get into your mojo with your guest.

05:30 Audio editing.

It sounds tricky, but you won't have to twist a single mixer dial unless you really want to. Our favorite program for getting started is Audacity. It's free, it's uncluttered, and it does the job. You can even record directly into it.

To edit an interview on Audacity — and by this we mean simply cutting out pauses, and umms and ahhs

— be prepared to add upwards of about 400 percent of the length of the raw audio. So, if the interview lasts thirty minutes, you'll be on the cutting-room floor for at least two hours.

You don't need a degree in audio engineering to use Audacity, and there are a ton of tutorials all for free on YouTube!

07:30 Show notes.

The time they take will have everything to do with what you want out of them. They're often the first touchpoint for a listener, and so they can become powerful marketing tools to create a strong sense of your show.

Brief or wordy, a teaser or a full summary, the choice is yours! At Ginni Media, we typically allot about two hours an episode for comprehensive notes.

Stop the clock! 9:30

Thinking of bowing out?

Okay, here are some other things you can do with that valuable time:

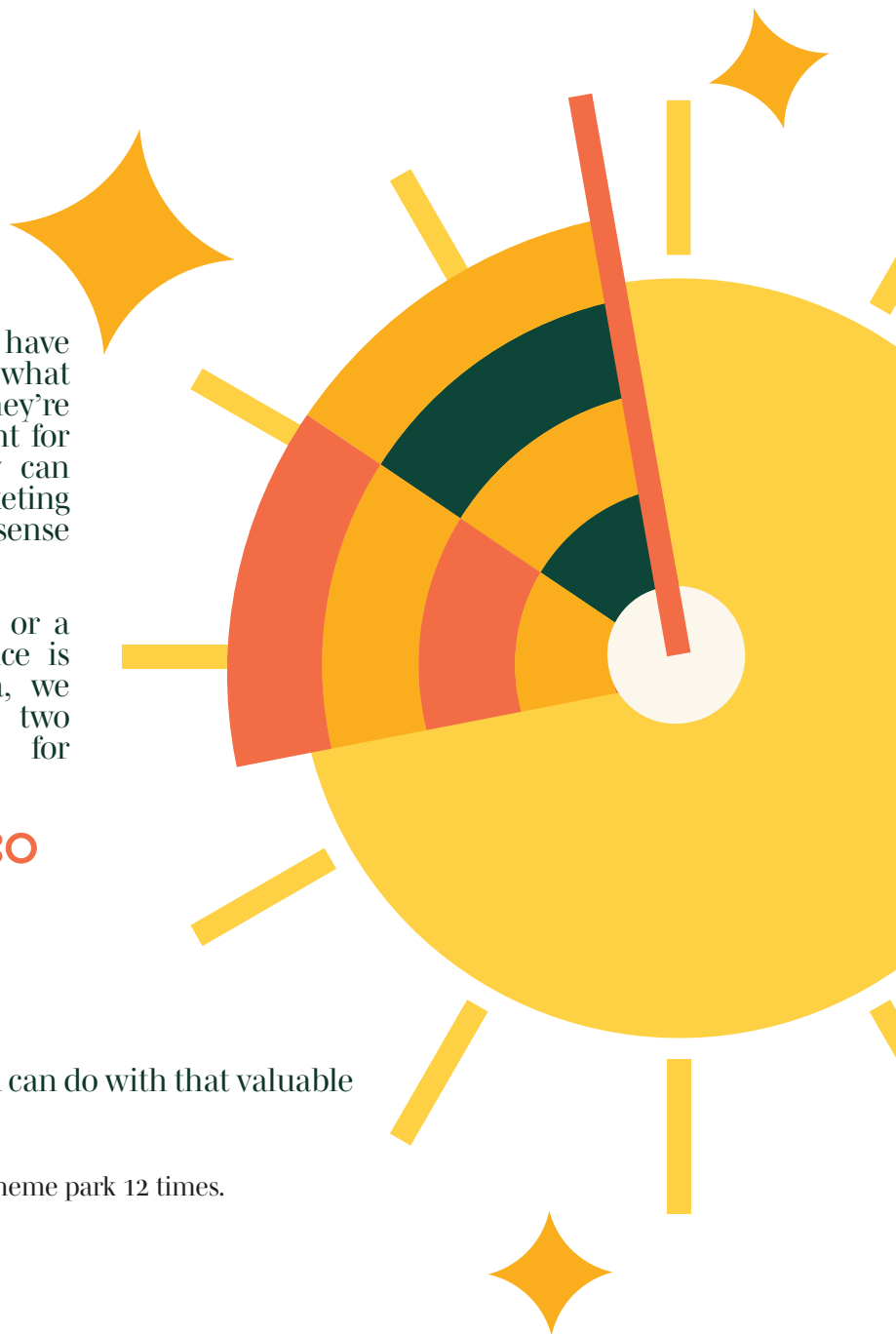
- Ride the rollercoasters at a major theme park 12 times.
- Cook with a tagine 4 times.
- Get your booty tattooed.
- Wait for NYC's R train. Still waiting.

#IdRatherBePodcasting

Um, just one more thing.

This list might feel exhausting, but it's not exhaustive. We're excluding initial tasks like purchasing equipment, learning the software/hardware, marketing time, developing the show's artwork/description, scripting (if you're doing that) etc.

Remember: Realistically, podcasting is a creative venture and a creative timeline is always going to be **relative**. It took Michelangelo four years to paint the Sistine Chapel, but it only took Beyoncé 20 minutes to write "Single Ladies"!



What happens next?

How to share your podcast and
stories with the world

Upload for downloads



If you followed our advice so far, congratulations! You've got your very own podcast!

everything from the number of downloads to the number of subscribers.

How can people hear it? You'll need to upload it onto a media hosting service.

Here are two we love to use:

Acast

Picture it as a middle-man between you and the podcast hosting platforms like Stitcher and Spotify.

We like that Acast is user friendly, comes with both web and mobile applications, and does pretty much everything you need. Plans are \$14.99 monthly.

Audioboom

Audioboom makes things super simple and also has easy monetizing solutions when your podcast picks up steam.

They also give you analytics, to help you see and manage

Media hosts: a comparison

FEATURES	ACAST (\$14.99/mo plan)	AUDIOBOOM (\$9.99/mo plan)
patreon integration	✓	✗
easy distribution to top apps	✓	✓
customizable website	✓	✗
analytics	✓	✓
unlimited episodes/downloads	✓	✗
embeddable player	✓	✓

A gallery for l'eyes et l'ears

Fire up that coffee machine, because there's still more room for you to stretch your creative legs!

Now that you've got your perfect show on your perfect media host, you're also going to need...



Podcast artwork

This is the first image that people will see when they hop on their podcast app and search for your show.

It's the visual expression of your podcast, so here are some requirements:

Format: Square (min. 1400 x 1400 px; max. 3000 x 3000 px)

File extension: PNG or JPG.

File size: Under 2MB.

Logo: Clear. If you're a business, you'll probably want to stick with your brand logo.

Stuck on the cover? Think of your podcast's ~vibe~. If you're a true crime horror podcast, you probably don't want cotton-candy pastels and a bubbly, childlike font. Likewise, if you're talking weekly about the pastoral beauty of hiking continental Europe, you probably don't want your title font to look like it's dripping blood. (Of course, if your vibe is irony, please do as you see fit!)



Our team has collected some of our favorites on our [Pinterest](#) account, so head there for more inspiration!

Show notes

Last but not least: You'll have to upload some show notes for each episode.


Once you've decided on your media hosting service, your artwork and your show notes, it's time to take your pod LIVE! Out of all the podcast apps, Apple is the OG and still has about 34% of the market share. For these reasons, we recommend starting there.

To submit your podcast to Apple Podcasts, you'll need to use your Apple ID to log into Podcasts Connect and go to "Submit a Podcast." And there you have it: a live RSS feed!



Click 'send'

To submit your podcast to Apple Podcasts, you'll need to use your Apple ID to log into Podcasts Connect and go to "Submit a Podcast." And there you have it: a live RSS feed!



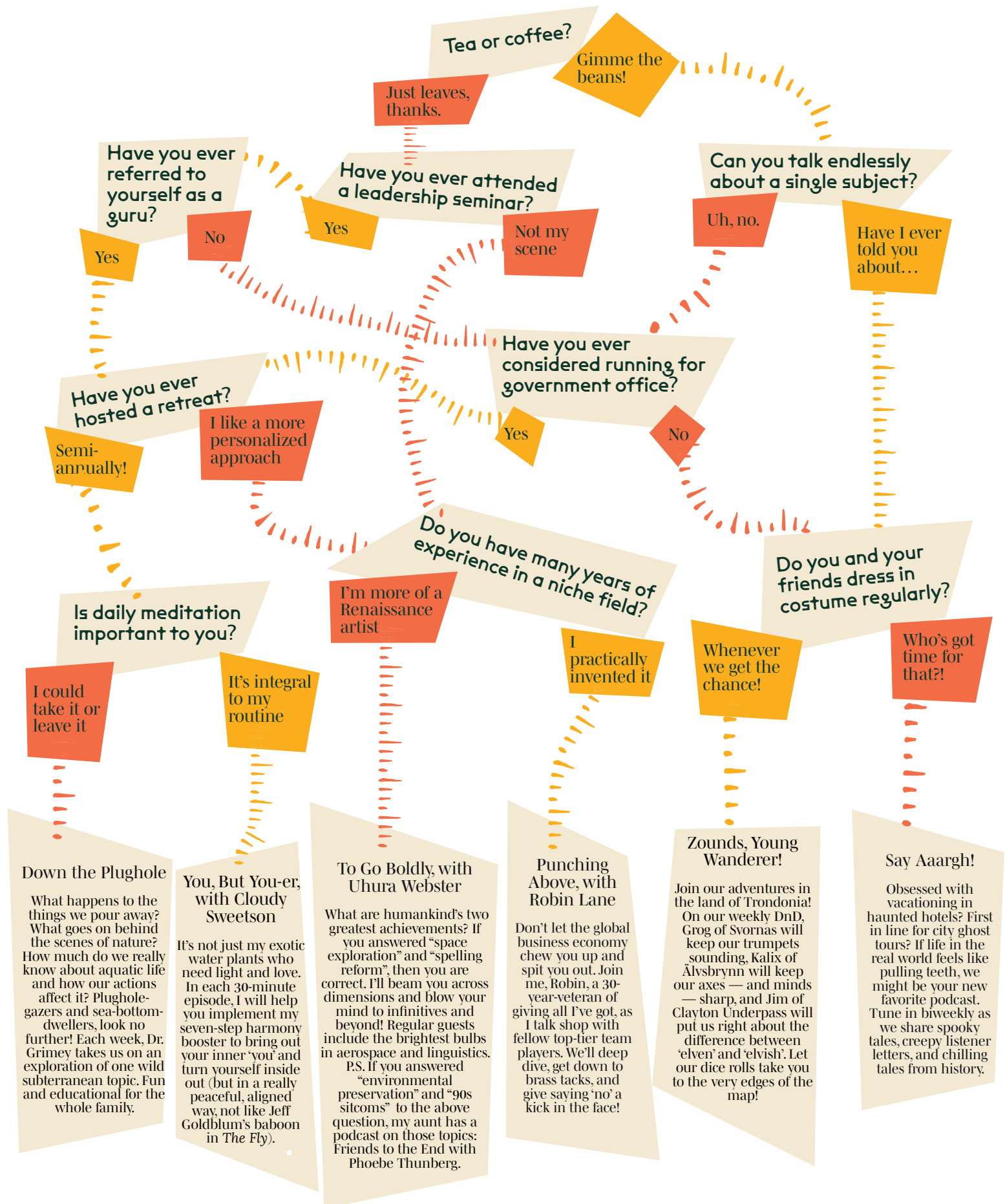
You've reached the very end of the book!

Holy wow. You're a fast reader. We hope you got a kick out of it.

This is the end. Well. Not the very **very** end. We've got a fun bonus for attentive types like you on the next page.

If you enjoyed this eBook, we have more fun stuff in development all about podcasting, audio and sound. Join our mailing list (write to letspod@ginnimedia.com) to be the first to get your hands on our stuff, or follow us (and say hi!) on our social media channels @ginnimedia.

What kind of podcast would best match my personality?



Loved your result? Totally you?
Rave about it on social media with the hashtag #MadeOffbeat!

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