



The Frugalpreneur Episode 2 – Corbett Barr on Creating Work That Matters

In Episode 2 of [Frugalpreneur Podcast](#) Shannyn chats with Corbett Barr, creator of ThinkTraffic.net, CorbettBarr.com, and ExpertEnough.com, who has also recently launched a new online course called “Start a Blog That Matters.” Listen in for what to expect.

Recommended Resources:

<http://www.ThinkTraffic.net>

<http://www.ExpertEnough.com>

<http://www.corbettbarr.com>

<http://www.startablogthatmatters.com>

Podcast Transcript:

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Shannyn Allan: Hey hey! Welcome to the second episode of The Frugalpreneur podcast. I’m your hostess, Shannyn Allan. Today we’re going to be featuring an interview with Corbett Barr, the creator of ThinkTraffic.net, ExpertEnough.com, and CorbettBarr.com. Now funny story, I actually recorded this interview with Corbett before I ever got to recording the first episode of the podcast. You might be able to tell I was totally nervous and stupid, excited to be on the phone with Corbett so forgive my little fan.

Besides that, this interview was chockfull of great insights on what it’s like to be an entrepreneur and how to create meaningful work that monetizes your passion and creates value for others. So get ready.

(Music playing)

All right. Hello everyone. I have Corbett Barr on the phone with us right now. I’m so excited to speak with him. He is the creator of ThinkTraffic.net, CorbettBarr.com, and ExpertEnough.com so hi Corbett. Welcome to the call.

Corbett: Hey thanks so much for having me on, Shannyn.

Shannyn: Wonderful. We’re so happy to have you here on the Frugalpreneur. Before we get started, can you tell the listeners a little bit about yourself? What

you did before you came to blogging and became what I would call a "blogging guru."

Corbett: Yeah. Sure. I'd be happy to. I run a small network of blogs I guess you can call it a publishing platform. I've been doing that for the past couple of years but before was a blogger I actually worked for about 10 years in the corporate world doing various things that I try very hard to forget about.

And also I ran a Silicon Valley venture back start up for two years but I never really found a connection with that work that I did. I never found fulfilment. I never thought that people really all that anxious at the work they were doing.

I sort of felt the same way so instead of jumping from one job to the next, I found myself sort of at a crossroads. I decided in 2009, early 2009 to take a 6-month road trip Sabbatical to Mexico. The purpose was really just to a step back and evaluate my life on what I wanted for my work, my career, and how I want that integrate with my life.

While we were down here, something really incredible happened. We met a bunch of people who weren't rich or retired but somehow figured out ways to make their career work around their lives instead of the other way around.

They'd figure out ways to travel the world or live in another country for months at a time. This really sort of weren't against everything I knew about work. I thought that either you work in a corporate environment for your whole life hoping to take a few weeks of vacation a year and maybe retire a little bit early or maybe you are an entrepreneur. You really put in as many hours as possible and swung for the fence and try to get wealthy.

So these people that we met were sort of trying to live as if they were retired even though they weren't. They also found careers that they enjoyed and so I started to blog in 2009.

Basically to chronicle that trip we were on and to also help me think through those issues of career in life. Starting a blog in 2009, you know I know it might sound cliché but it really changed my life. I've been on a completely different path ever since. I ended up building this mini-publishing empire that I mentioned before, which now support me entirely through courses and other online products that I sell essentially.

That enables my wife and I to travel quite a bit. We have returned to Mexico every winter for the past four years. And actually I am talking to you to talk you now from Mexico. Then in the summers we typically travel as well, we went to Europe for a couple of months in this past summer.

Shannyn: Very cool. I know that your story has been something that's been highly inspirational for me and many of my blogger friends that I've made in my about a year of blogging now.

And so you kind of sounds like you were already having these ideas of transforming your life and your work and your blog kind of reflected that exploration. Do you have any advice for people that are looking to make that transition? Perhaps they're stuck in a job now that they don't really find fulfilling but they're not quite at that point yet where they're ready to transform their lives. Do you have any you know start up advice like that?

Corbett: Yeah. I mean a couple of things. The first is that I found that it was very difficult to understand what I really wanted form life when I was surrounded by the typical influences.

So you know I tend to be sort of a sponge. I like, like a lot of people I think tend to mimic or integrate with the environment that I am in. if you live in a city or the suburbs like a lot of people do, people who are working jobs that they maybe don't enjoy surround you.

They're basically pursuing money and status. In the end, it took the Sabbatical for me to understand that's not really what I'm after in life. I wanted something deeper. I wanted to create meaning out of my life. I wanted to enjoy what I do. I realized that you know an average people spend 40 or 50 hours a week at their jobs and it's a shame to do something that you don't enjoy.

So for people who were thinking about making a transition. The biggest thing you know first maybe to take a step back. Maybe take an extended vacation if you can or something to really reflect but then also to focus on not just becoming self-employed because you think that the, you know the reason you're happy is in fact that you work a job. I think it's more important to try to create meaning out of what you do and to really try to do something that matters.

I see a lot of people struggled because they think that they can work online and you know "make money online" and jump into creating you know all kinds of things that these Internet marketers you know say that it is easy cash or whatever.

Not only do most of them fail but also even the ones that succeed ends up being unhappy there as well because cash isn't the answer to happiness as they say. So look for you know what you really enjoy, what you're passionate about and try to figure out how to create meaning out of your life and how to do something that matters.

Shannyn: That's powerful stuff. Now I totally understand because there is so much information out there when somebody is looking either to change their life completely or to have a side hassle with the blogger online business.

So much content out there is just about marketing and social media, growing a network, and making money online, which is all well and good but like you said if there's not a passion behind it. You're not going to want to keep doing especially after the first two months when you know maybe you're making \$3 to the

Adsense or you know a project you worked on for months and completely flopped. Do you have to have the passion there?

Corbett: Right. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. Go ahead.

Shannyn: And so you know if somebody does know what their passion is and they're ready you know ready to make this transition. Do you have any advice for people? Is there anything that you think somebody needs to have in place? Beyond passion, if they're ready to make a transition or build either side hustle or full time income working online?

Corbett: Well one of the things that comes to mind is to have some sort of a financial cushion because you know I've been on the situation where I decided to work for myself. Usually in the beginning stages of starting a business, there isn't a whole lot of income coming in. sometimes for a year or more, you won't have a whole lot of income coming in so you have to decide if you're going to perhaps do your you know business on the side or create your business in some sides I guess tied hustle as you call it.

Or if you're going go full time and jump into it with both feet, I was able to do that twice actually. I started businesses where I wasn't earning income for a year or so. Mostly because I have built up a financial cushion and I work really hard in my corporate life to earn a decent income and to save as much of that as possible.

That savings really is what for me was a first step to freedom. It was the ability to buy time and then to invest in growing my self and my own business. So that you know, that's one of the things that I think a lot of people don't think about. They hate their jobs so much that they just want out.

But the fact is that if you're trying to build business, your judgment can become very clouded if you don't have a financial cushion. You're just worried about how you're going to be feeding yourself week to week.

Shannyn: Totally. I know that sometimes it's tempting to just throw in the towel at a job you hate and completely want to survive on your blogging income. Do you have any advice for somebody that doesn't have that cushion? That's putting their all in and isn't really seeing a great return on investment. Do you have any input or ideas around how to work through the lulls and to know that you're on the right path? I'm sure that the answer would vary so much from blog-to-blog, niche-to-niche but you know everyone hits those lulls especially in the first year of starting their own gig. Do you know like did you ever have an indicator that you were on the right path?

Corbett: No. I think like most people I questioned myself you know basically everyday for the first year or so I was involved. I wrote a post recently about how starting a business isn't all unicorns and rainbows. It's not as easy as you might hope.

There will be trying times. There will be days when you feel like quitting. There will be months when you feel like you poured your heart and soul into something and nobody is paying attention.

We all have those roadblocks. We all run into these things. The thing that determines whether or not you're going to be successful really is how you deal with those roadblocks.

If you look at success stories, if you study people who have been successful, they all encountered things that could have made them quit and yet they thought you're gone.

I'm not an expert in terms of "the dip" as they call it. Seth Godin wrote an entire book on this but I do know that I tried a lot of things over the past three years that I've been blogging.

A lot of those things failed in fact probably 80% or 90% of those things fail especially in the first year and a half or so. But because I love what I was doing, because I believed in what I was doing, and because I had some great examples of people who had succeeded in a very similar way, I knew it was possible.

I just knew there was some personal growth that had to happen for me then I had to grow as an entrepreneur. I had to grow as a blogger. I had to understand things and keep experimenting and eventually I came up with the formula that works for me.

So you know that's usually what I encourage people to do is not necessarily to keep doing the same thing over and over and over and over and expecting different results.

I think Einstein said that that's the definition of insanity but instead if you're not getting the results that you'd hoped for, experiment. Just try putting out different kinds of content. Try starting a new site project. Try connecting with different people. Try forming a mentorship group of some sort. Try all kinds of things to help you breakthrough the plateaus and the dips that you might be encountering. Experimentation for me has been the key to success.

Shannyn: That's fascinating. I definitely would have to agree with that point that experimentation especially when it represents your own development of authenticity is key to making survival happen during your first year out or even your second year depending on where you are in your business.

So really think that's key: experimentation and being able to find what works for you personally. I think that's really solid advice for people that are starting out or even re-evaluating where they are at.

And so you mentioned starting groups and reaching to other people, building networks but was there anything that you remember encountering when you

started out that you could attribute to some of your success like your favourite books, your favourite blogs, or any recommended resources?

Corbett: Yeah. Well, if you don't mind you just mentioned something that I think bares rolling down a little bit, which is the network and the relationships and the connections you make if you are an entrepreneur or a blogger online, those things are absolutely critical to your success because if you think about the way you attract an audience to your site.

It's not as if visitors come out of thin air. They have to be encouraged to visit your site from some other place that they're already hanging out. Your job is really to figure where the people who might be most interested in what you're talking about on your site or what you're offering. Know where they already hang out and somehow get in front of those people and bring them back to your own site.

One of the best ways you can do that is by meeting some people who also operate sites online and doing things like we are doing right now like interviews. If you make friends with people, it's more likely that they would eventually link to you or mention you in an article or something or you can do a group project together.

So those, I think a lot of people a blog then they operate in the vacuum and they just hope that people are going to notice them. What they don't realize is that in most cases successful bloggers behind these scenes are having all kinds of conversations with other entrepreneurs and bloggers on a regular basis.

Today for example on my calendar, I will be talking to five different other bloggers. I regularly everyday at least talk to one or maybe two other bloggers. I've met a lot of people over the past three years. That is certainly one of the keys to my success. Just getting out there and talking to people.

Sometimes just to commensurate with people and to swap war stories so that you feel like you're not alone. You feel like you know you're not a failure. It's just part of the process. It's a growing process.

And also partly as I've said so you can you know connect for mutual benefits so you can do interviews and link to each other. You group projects and things like that.

Shannyn: For sure. I know that in my experience going to conferences and even local blogger meet ups of all stripes has been tremendously beneficial to me personally but also for my blogs. It goes beyond metrics but it's more of personal development and enrichment that comes along.

Because like you said, it's so easy to be behind a laptop in a coffee shop somehow and not talking to anybody, headphones on, focusing on drilling through your post that you have scheduled for the week without ever making those connections that I think add so much to your writing.

That was another thing I was going to bring up with you, who is about getting out of that vacuum, getting out of the cubicle you've recreated for yourself. Do you, what do you do to make sure you stoke the fires of creativity and make sure you are not spending your entire life just as a blogger but as a human being and stoking the creative fires that will help your contents? Do you have any insights on that?

Corbett: Yeah. I mean I, especially now I really love what I am doing. I intend to be a workaholic if I don't have other things going on. I can definitely spend you know most of my days working.

So I try to get out and force myself to have social interactions, to have new experiences, to travel, and to set up my calendar with a number of things that are not going to be work related.

Simply because the conversations that I have, the things that I experienced, the activities that I do, for example you know, we're here in Mexico. I spend a decent amount of time surfing while we're down here.

While we were in Europe last summer, we actually spend time in six different countries while we were there. So we are on the move a bit. Those things sort of force me to experience you know new things and also not to be sitting in front of my desk.

What I find about creativity is that I'm good for about one creative thing a day or one you know piece of content that I can create a day. Beyond that, I end up sitting and not really accomplishing a whole lot.

You know, just being unproductive. I think that time is better spent like you said, "stoking the fires of creativity," having conversation with people, doing things that can take your mind off of work immediately.

Because sometimes in those conversations or those moments of solid solitude, that's where you come up with the ideas that really become something for yourself.

Shannyn: Very true. Just to switch gears a little bit, you have an excellent site, which I absolutely love. A coordinating podcast with Expert Enough. I love the fact that you draw upon expertise of all kinds. Because I think that might be one of the biggest hurdles that people have is trusting themselves and their voice and developing their own sense of belonging that they can talk about what they care about and be taken seriously.

Corbett: Right.

Shannyn: So I think that Expert Enough is an excellent resource for anyone listening to this. You have to check out Expert Enough. It is phenomenal. I'll have links in the show notes but do you have any insights on how people can develop and trust their own voice and their expertise? Because I'm sure you work

a lot with the experts that I've done that successfully. But for people that are a bit shaky about it.

Corbett: Yeah. Definitely. I mean the first piece of advice is not to think about expertise as an absolute. I think a lot of people feel like they are experts then there are non experts but the truth is if you look at it. Expertise is relative so for example you could think of expertise as a scale of 1 to 10.

The 10s are the world's greatest experts on the topic. On the way down the line, you go from 1 to 10. Maybe you're three on that scale so that doesn't mean you are the world's greatest expert.

But think about what you might be able to offer to the ones in the 2s in the world. Perhaps you can offer advice about getting started because they you know they're behind you. They don't understand those things.

Maybe they can't learn from the world's greatest experts because they're just not using the same vocabulary or maybe you can bridge the gap. Maybe you can serve as a facilitator who connects the ones and twos of the world with all of the great resources that are out there that you learned in order to get to your status as level 3.

So think about expertise as being relative. The other thing is you know we all have things that we're interested in. Things that we feel especially passionate about, things that maybe sort of come naturally to us, things that you wake up thinking about, maybe things that you read about even in your spare time.

Those are great candidates for becoming an expert on those topics because you have the natural motivation and drive to pursue that. Realize that most people were talking about issues like that will never spend more than a couple of days looking into an issue.

A lot of people will only rely on second hand information. They won't even read the source information. So if you spend a month or two months really deep diving into a topic and reading about it, talking with people about it, writing about it, exploring your thoughts, paying attention to source materials, studies that have been done.

That might put you ahead of you know 90%, 95%, or even 99% of other people in terms of your depth of knowledge in that particular area because you've dedicated the time to it. So becoming an expert is really about sitting down and spending the time and practicing deliberately to become better at your skill or to understand more about the topics that you're trying to learn.

Shannyn: Wonderful. I think that is totally key and I think it just takes a lot of practice. It really does. The message is to just immerse yourself in the content.

One thing that I've encountered again is that people care about something and you can only get better at it by doing it. You can spend three months in a book,

reading about Karate or knitting socks or whatever you do but it isn't until you start a dialogue about it and share your knowledge.

Know the first couple of things you say about it might not be the most groundbreaking, epic content you've ever, you know, you've put out there or experience but that your voice does gets stronger.

The more you learn and the more you kind of process the content and put it out there for other people and make it simple for people, especially you said at the different levels that you may not always have success reaching out to other people that are tense and are totally under standard or at your level but to somebody that just needs basic knowledge or somebody that's curious to learn more, there are different ways to reach out to different audiences so it's not just one homologous group that has to be you know that can benefit from your content.

So I think those are fabulous insights. Finally I just wanted to bring up a little bit about the course that you're starting or that you have started: "How To Start a Blog That Matters."

I think it's a phenomenal resource. Would you like to talk more about this awesome program?

Corbett: Sure. So basically you know I've started three blogs myself now. I run those three blogs and I've learned a lot about blogging from starting those blogs. When combined they attract over 100,000 visitors per month.

But also over the years I've helped a number of friends, a number of you know colleagues, and a number of customers actually start blogs themselves. So through this deep one-on-one work with people.

For example, Scott D'Insmark from LiveYourLegend. Last year I've helped build him build that blog and now he runs basically, he is running a business around it. He has attracted tens of thousands of subscribers from that blog.

It's been a big success. He and I worked hand-in-hand for about six months. You know very intensely talking every week, coming up with the strategy, developing that blog. Through the work that I did with him and a number of other people, I sort of developed a framework that I've used when I help people start a new blog that really gets them off to hit the- ground running, and to build their blog up into something that actually matters.

Because there are millions of blogs out there, hundreds of millions blogs out there, there are thousands of new blogs started everyday. If you think about it, only a small portion of those ever becomes recognized or ever becomes popular.

Most of them pretty much go unnoticed but this framework that I've developed. I've used a number of times. I've seen it worked a number of times then I realize that a lot of people would love to learn from this framework but don't necessarily have the time to work with me one-on-one.

I frankly can't help that many people one-on-one as well. I took the framework that I had used. I recorded about 8 hours of video about that framework. I laid it out into 13 weekly lessons that people can follow that gets them from no blogging experience at all to launching a blog to making relationships with other bloggers to coming up with a great topic for them, learning how to create shareable content, and just everything I would have wanted to know over the first 90 days of being a bloggers.

The things that really can help you stand out, make a name for yourself, and just gain some momentum that otherwise might take you, you know a year and a half to learn on your own.

Frankly a lot of people don't have that kind of stamina. Even though they might have a good shot at being successful if they don't learn from other people who have done something like blogging than you know maybe you're not going to stick with it for the year and a half or two years that it would take to learn all that stuff.

So hopefully over a course of three months when I walk you through this process of the lessons and the action items that we recommend then that would get you over that hump to get you a taste of success and then you'd be able to build on that.

(Members) can create something that matters. To me, something that matters doesn't necessarily mean building a business. That could be if that's your goal but also it could be just exploring your creativity. It could be becoming recognized as an expert on a particular topic. Or it could be trying to land your dream job to get a writing deal or just to make a difference in the world, or to help people see things in a different way, to start a movement, to change the world in the way you see fits.

So that's the purpose of the course. It's called "How to Start a Blog That Matters."

Shannyn: Okay. Perfect. That's located at StartaBlogThatMatters.com. I'll have the link in the show notes for our listeners can get a hold of that. A quick question that like guided or can people get started at any time that's convenient for them?

Corbett: They can start at anytime essentially it's laid out over the course of 90 days. There are 13 weekly lessons. When you sign up, we will send you a weekly reminder email explaining what you should be working on and going into the lessons but if you need to take more or less time than that. You can do that if you need to wait for a couple of weeks to get started or whatever. It's self-guided essentially so you can start at anytime.

Shannyn: Perfect. Because I think that would be great for people that are blogging right now as like a side hustle or doing it for a hobby or part time that

don't necessarily don't have a set block of time each and everyday to sit down and work through a course.

So the flexibility is really great either starting or completion so it's really cool. I will be posting on the blog and in the show notes. I think it's a great resource because in my year of blogging. I've seen so many courses that seek to do what you're trying to do and what you're able to do and don't quite hit the mark.

But I have heard nothing but good things about your course and I've also read your various works. I think it's going to be a great value for people. So anyway, I think that about wraps up.

Is there anything else that you want to say or should I be done interviewing you at this point?

Corbett: No. I wanted to say congratulations on doing your first interview. I am trying to think back to my first interview. I remembered being fairly being nervous and not exactly getting all the questions up that I wanted to but I think you did a great job. I am happy to be your first guest.

Shannyn: Oh thank you. Just know I'm trying to lead by example. I have so many bloggers that I read regularly like you. I knew that if I really wanted to help other bloggers and entrepreneurs to take the next step and to reach out and build what they really care about, which mine is helping other people do what they love, which is similar to your message and exactly why I wanted you on this podcast. I knew that I would never be able to write about it if I didn't do things that kind of intimidated me.

Podcasting is definitely out of my comfort zone so anyone listening to this first podcast know that I appreciate your patience. Corbett, I am so happy to have you on this today. If there's anything you ever need you let me know. I will share it with my reader because they can greatly benefit from your message and the fact that you serve others so authentically. You've been a great help to me personally. Thank you so much for being my first guest.

Corbett: Thank you so much, Shannyn, for having me on. I wish you the best of luck with your projects.

Shannyn: All right. Thanks, Corbett.

I hope you enjoyed that interview with Corbett as much as I did. If you want to see more of what he has to offer on what he is all about. Be sure to check out some of his site like ExpertEnough.com or listen to his podcast on iTunes. Also if you want more information about his course, head on over to StartaBlogThatMatters.com or you can click the affiliate link on my side bar. I will also have it linked in the show notes so again thanks for tuning in for the second episode of The Frugalpreneur podcast. I will see you back here for Episode Three. Thanks.

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