



# *Delicious* Blogging

The Ingredients You Need To Create A Better Blog

## Action Steps Workbook



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# Chapter 1

- ❑ If you are reading this workbook it means you've already signed up for my **email list**. Great job!
  - As you go through these 31 lessons you are going to need some encouragement. This is exactly what you will find in my **weekly newsletter**. It's filled with tips, tricks, support, and insight into my life as a blogger, wife, and mom.
  
- ❑ Create a Blog Ingredients bookmark folder on your browser and/or a pin board on Pinterest
  - Label this folder or board “Blog Ingredients.”
  - As you go through this book bookmark and/or pin the resources you find so you can put your own blog recipe together.
  - This will become your ingredient list for a better blog.

## Notes



## Chapter 2

- ❑ Join a community on Facebook or Google+.
  - Find a group and join hundreds of other bloggers who share their voices around the web, and who hang out in a group to support and encourage one another. If you've been looking for others bloggers AND answers to your most pressing blogging questions, a community is the place to start.
  - Here is a short list to get you started:
    - **BIG Idea Bloggers**
    - **Learn To Blog**
    - **Inspired Bloggers Network**
    - **Bloggers: Learn, Grow, Encourage**
  - There are many more you can explore and join.
  - Don't be hesitant to introduce yourself. It's the fastest way to get to know other in the group and start building community. Look around and jump right in. Participation is encouraged.

## Notes





## Chapter 3

- ❑ Go to your site. Does your photo meet the criteria described in this chapter? Is it in the right location, above the fold?
  - If it does, great job. Remember to update your photos every 12-24 months.
  - If it needs to be moved, do it now.
  
- ❑ If you know you need a new photo, start doing your research and prepare to have a new photo taken in the next 30 days.
  - You want good lighting, a bright smile and to be looking right into the camera.
  - Keep the main focus at your shoulders and above. This is imperative for social media which we will talk about more in Chapter 15.
  - Find a professional, a friend, or even take your own.

## Notes



## Chapter 4

- ❑ Read your own ABOUT page out loud.
  - How does it sound?
  - Ask a friend or your spouse to read it. What's their opinion? Does it reflect the you they know and love?
  
- ❑ Answer the five questions below from the perspective of a new reader. Better yet, recruit someone else to read it and answer them for you.
  - Do I know your name?
  - Can I feel your passion?
  - Do you care about me?
  - Why should I read your blog?
  - What do you want me to do next?

Make a list of what you need to work on.

- ❑ Schedule a time in your blog planner when you can to come back on work on this for a significant amount of time.

## Notes



## Chapter 5

- ❑ Add social media buttons to your site. Place them at the top or the bottom of your blog. Make it easy for your readers to follow you.
  - Remember the platforms we take for granted spend a lot of money to create their logos. Please respect them and use the proper logos.
  - Consider how you would feel if someone were to share your blog, but make up any logo to represent you. You've probably worked hard to brand your site. No matter what you think about these platforms, so have they.
  
- ❑ Choose two platforms to focus on for the next 30 days.
  - Don't spread yourself too thin. It's okay to have buttons for other platforms, but work hard to be present on your two main traffic drivers.
  - Post regularly to these channels. Use status updates (if appropriate), graphics and photos, ask questions and engage with your readers with more than blog posts. Be a real person, not only a blog.
  - Be sure to share the posts, pins, and tweets of other bloggers and writers as they apply to your audience and posts. Share the love and build up your readers.
  
- ❑ Research how to best use social media.
  - Start your research with this **Pinterest board**. Don't try to read it all at once. Bite off small chunks and take notes.





# Notes



## Chapter 6

- ❑ Look at your sidebar.
  - Do you have the necessary elements above the fold?
  - What can you move to a separate page or remove altogether to give your readers a more pleasurable experience?
  - Where is your eye drawn when you first visit your page?
  - Answer these questions.
  
- ❑ Go visit five of your favorite blogs.
  - Look critically at the sidebars.
  - What do you like? What distracts you? Do you see how they flow, or don't?
  - Make a list of what appeals to you.
  - Begin to apply these to your own site.
  
- ❑ Ask someone else to look at your sidebar.
  - Get some honest feedback and make the necessary adjustments.
  - Ask a blog reader, not only your spouse or best friend.
  - Be teachable.



# Notes



## Chapter 7

- ❑ Have someone who doesn't read your blog regularly give you a critique.
  - Make the necessary adjustments.
  - Add and take away until each menu is right.
  - Don't be afraid to leave some items off. It doesn't ALL have to be in your menus. Link from other places if necessary.
  - Make sure each link works properly.
  
- ❑ Look at some of your favorite blogs.
  - Take notes about the menus you see out there.
  - What do you like?
  - What can you do better?
  - Be a style copycat, it's okay in this situation.
  
- ❑ Make a note to yourself right now, to re-visit your menu 3 months from today
  - Come back and make sure all the links work correctly.
  - Rearrange if necessary.
  - As you grow and change as a blogger, so should your menus. Make updates and do some routine maintenance.



# Notes





## Chapter 8

- ❑ List out all your categories and pick the five to eight best encompassing your mission and your expertise.
  - Start putting your posts in the proper categories
  - Make sure you have these categories listed in your menu.
  - Be honest and don't try to stuff something in if it doesn't fit, no matter how much you love a post.
  
- ❑ Put all the remaining posts into an uncategorized or miscellaneous category
  - Go back through these and see if you can fit them into your main list.
  - If a post is uncategorized, has no comments, is old or doesn't fit with your blog, un-publish it.
  - Look at your calendar and mark down six months from today to go back and revisit these unpublished posts and see what you can trash. You should have plenty of content to now to replace these old posts.



## Chapter 8 cont.

- ❑ Make a list of ten new posts to write for each of your remaining categories
  - Rotate these posts into your publishing line up.
  - Mix them up at regular intervals
  - If you are drawn to a few categories more than others over a three to six month period, think about phasing out the less used ones over time.
  - Be sure to check your Google Analytics to see what your readers are drawn to as well.

## Notes



## Chapter 9

- ❑ Look at your contact page
  - Do you have your email and /or a contact form?
  - Do you have an email button prominent on the page or in the sidebar?
  - Can a visitor contact you easily?
  
- ❑ Visit some other blogs and look at their contact pages
  - If you find something you like or wording you connect with, rework it to make it your own
  - It's okay to be a copycat with this element

## Notes



# Chapter 10

## ☐ Take a “Day 10”

- If it isn't today, put it on the calendar and make it happen.
- No one will die if you don't work on your blog. I know this from experience and you can trust me.

## Notes



# Chapter 11

- ❑ Review your use of fonts.
  - The fonts you use should be simple, readable, and easy to insert.
  - Fonts should not take up too much time to insert.
  - If possible, relegate fun fonts to your graphics. Make them count.
  - If you use an extra font, make sure it is readable across all mediums and browsers.
  - If you want to change your font it should come from Google Fonts to be guaranteed readability across the web.
  
- ❑ Choose a passive color and an action color for your blog.
  - Keep a list of the colors you use.
  - Use the same two colors every time.
  - Make sure your main text color is looks good when printed.

## Notes





# Chapter 12

## ❑ Find a blog planner

- Whether you use pen and paper, your phone, your computer or a combination of all three, you must have a place to write down your goals and your ideas.
- Being organized isn't something you can do down the road. You must do it now!
- Start using it today. Even if you only write a few ideas down, it's vital for you to start practicing so planning becomes a habit.

## ❑ Do a quick life evaluation.

- Is there something you need to say "No" to during this season?
- Figure out your blogging goals - they can be simple to extravagant - and see how they align with your time, energy, and resources.
- Make the necessary adjustments.

# Notes



## Chapter 13

- ❑ Go back through your last five to ten posts.
  - Do you have enough photos or too many?
  - Do you have a great pinnable photo?
  - Do they create a consistent look?
  - Now, fix 'em.
  
- ❑ Look at the quotes you've used on some recent posts.
  - Do you know about the person who said them?
  - Does the person line up with your values and the values of your blog?
  - Make the necessary adjustments.
  
- ❑ As you move forward from here.
  - Make some choices about what your photos are going to look like.
  - Decide on a consistent layout and feel.
  - This will help you establish your blog and your brand in the eyes of your readers.

## Notes



## Chapter 14

- ❑ Make sure the photos you have been using are not copyrighted.
  - Go back at least five posts, or even ten and make sure the photos you are using are not copyrighted. If you don't know, be safe and add something new.
  - Look at the list from Chapter 13 or the other articles I've mentioned and find something legal to use.
  - If you know you have been using photos inappropriately, fix the problem as soon as possible.
  
- ❑ Start taking your own photos.
  - If this is new to you, go out and practice. Nature is a great place to try your hand at photography.
  - You don't have to be Ansel Adams. You need only like the pictures you take.
  - Be sure your settings on your camera are for high-quality, large photos so you can shrink them for your blog.
  
- ❑ Design a watermark you can put on any graphic or photo in **PicMonkey**.
  - If you are new to PicMonkey click the tutorial mentioned in the book to help get you started with this powerful tool.
  - If you know how to do this already make sure your watermark has your URL in it for easy access to your site.



# Notes



## Chapter 15

- ❑ Find out which two platforms drive the most traffic to your site
  - Use **Google Analytics** to learn which platforms you should be focused on.
  - Do some quick research on how to use these platforms well. Find some articles to dig into a little deeper for later.
  - Find the board for your two platforms in my **Pinterest Library** and read one article about it right now.
  
- ❑ Create a plan
  - Dive into **The ULTIMATE Social Media Scheduling Kit** and start using it for your two chosen platforms.
  
- ❑ Act like a head chef
  - Learn to set a timer for your social media time
  - Create separate time so you can feed your personal social media addiction
  - Don't try to mix your work time and your playtime.
  - Write down how long you are going to spend on your two platforms today and then go do it - but only as it applies to your blog, don't head off on rabbit trails of cookie recipes or cute outfits.





# Notes



## Chapter 16

- ❑ Check out the tools above and start using at least one right away
  - Use the free version to start and then see if you need a paid version
  - As you progress, this is definitely a good use of your money, if you learn to use it right.
  
- ❑ Start scheduling great content to your social media profiles
  - Be sure to share more than just your posts
  - Graphics, encouragement, interesting articles, and posts from others really help drive traffic back to you

## Notes



## Chapter 17

- ❑ Take a look at your mission statement
  - Does it match your Twitter strategy?
  - Use it to find info your readers want and need
  - Use it to develop your Twitter plan.
  - Keep the focus revolving around your mission and ROCK Twitter.
  
- ❑ Decide on a scheduler
  - Choose a tool you can schedule Tweets with
  - Go schedule five right now.
  
- ❑ Share yourself with your readers
  - If you are a soul blogger, share your life with your followers.
  - Go Tweet something right now that isn't a post but says something about you and your day. Do it right now.
  
- ❑ Practice constructing great tweets
  - As you schedule those five tweets above and share something about yourself, work hard to make your wording clear and enticing.
  - Draw your followers in.
  - Make them want more.



# Notes



## Chapter 18

- ❑ Look at how you share on Facebook.
  - If you use a page, concentrate on sharing quality content that relates to both your blog and your audience.
  - If you use your personal profile, be sure you are sharing your blog posts and personal content. You can definitely build your blog if you share your posts.
  
- ❑ Schedule your posts.
  - Use the Facebook Scheduler or a social media service such as Buffer or Hootsuite to schedule your shares, posts, questions, and pictures to your Facebook page or profile.
  - Remember, make your social media work for you.

## Notes





## Chapter 19

- ❑ Pick two of the tabs above and insert them on your page.
  - I suggest putting Pinterest on if it is one of your top two traffic drivers
  - If you are on MailChimp, put that one on there too, especially if you have a FREEBIE to offer new subscribers.
  
- ❑ Make sure your tabs are showing on the main page and not buried.
  - Move the tabs and arrange them so your info is easy to find
  - Photos and likes are not important tabs to have on your page, unless you are a photographer, then, well, you know...

## Notes



## Chapter 20

- ❑ Go schedule your Facebook posts for tomorrow on either Buffer or Hootsuite.
  - Aim for five posts, only two of which are from your blog.
  - Try 6-9-12-3-6 or 7-10-1-4-7 or any variation that works for you
  
- ❑ Make sure you have a description on your cover photo
  - Put a call-to-action (CTA) in your description.
  - Either lead them back to your blog, or to your sign-up list.
  
- ❑ Go post on five pages as your own page
  - Follow the instructions in this chapter to post as your page, not yourself.
  
- ❑ Stop hitting like.
  - Take an extra ten minutes today and start reading through your feed.
  - Whenever you feel like hitting the LIKE button leave a comment instead.
  - It actually takes practice to do this and you'll mess up in the days to come. It's okay.
  - Stop liking things and start interacting with people.



# Notes



# Chapter 21

## Check your bio

- Do you need to do a little work here?
- It's not as hard as your blog bio.
- Make it snappy, fun, and to the point.

## Lead your followers well

- If you are like me, with a couple thousand pins, it's hard to keep track of where every one of your pins lead.
- Starting today, before you pin something new check and find out where it leads your audience.
- Be careful what you pin, especially if you are trying to have a Christian witness.

## Get pinned

- Pin your posts.
- Make a board right now where you can pin your own posts.
- Don't forget to add these to any other applicable board too.
- It's good to pin yourself.



# Notes





## Chapter 22

- ❑ Add a PIN IT button to your site.
  - This is a no-brainer and you need to get it on it ASAP.
- ❑ There is no number two – go put your feet up and relax!
  - Go have a life. You've earned it!

## Notes



## Chapter 23

### Know your mission

- Go write down or print out your mission statement for your blog
- Now go look at your Pinterest boards
- Do you have boards that are inline with your mission?
- If so, great.
- If not, make some.

### Serve your followers

- What question can you answer with your boards?
- What help can you give with your pins?
- Start stocking your one-stop shop with great boards and useful pins

### Do NOT pin anything personal for ten minutes.

- Start practicing using Pinterest as a tool, not a play toy.
- Schedule your next pinning session. Try to make it 15 minutes without pinning for yourself.
- Keep building up your time until you've got it dialed in.
- Grow your blog.



# Notes



## Chapter 24

### Start your own group board

- Start a new board (watch the video above if you need help)
- Invite others to your board
- Add a pin (or several) to get it started

### Go join another group board

- Find a group board that looks interesting to you and request to join
- Pin to that board when you are invited
- Remember to pin there often

## Notes



## Chapter 25

- ❑ Add Instagram to your social media repertoire
  - Sign up for an account
  - Start taking photos and sharing them
  - Practice. You don't have to be perfect or do it all right from the get-go. Give yourself some grace.
  
- ❑ Think about ways to incorporate your blog posts into your photos
  - Use the feelings you wrote about and share them in a photo or two.
  - Show the behind the scenes for something personal you shared on your blog.
  - Maybe you made a recipe – show what it looked like when it wasn't picture perfect, or the one that didn't turn out.
  - Be real.

## Notes



## Chapter 26

- ❑ Use hashtags on your Instagram pictures.
  - Need an example? Go to **Instagram**.
  - That was easy.
  
- ❑ Make some hashtag lists you can easily cut and paste to go with your most regular types of photos.
  - My lists include, school, Sunday, family, blog.
  - Come up with your own lists.
  - Super popular hashtags usually include the word “insta”, like #instacool or #instablogging

## Notes





## Chapter 27

### Claim your Google+ profile

- Go log into your Gmail account and claim your profile.
- Fill out your name
- Add a picture of yourself – the same one you use on all your social media profiles.

### Read the article above about circles

- Go circle me on G+. You can find me at **+DebiStangelandBlog**
- Go find some friends and circle them too

## Notes



## Chapter 28

- ❑ Try posting to Google+ using the recipe above
  - Follow each step and create something people want to read
  - Use appropriate hashtags and a good image
  - Call the readers to action with a link or two
  - Ask a question to start the discussion ball rolling
  
- ❑ Don't be discouraged
  - You probably didn't notice, but it took you a while to build up your community on FB. It just didn't feel like it because your mom or your sister were always there.
  - G+ is different. It's like going to a new school. It takes a bit of time to find your way around.
  - It will happen if you keep trying.

## Notes



## Chapter 29

- ❑ Sign up for an email list service
  - Do some research and choose the service that best fits your needs.
  - As you think about your needs, be sure to be thinking ahead, long term so that you don't have to make a change on the way to success.
  - That means, don't just pick one because it's the cheapest.
  - Make sure it has the functionality you need or MAY need in the future.
  - Dream big here!
  
- ❑ Put a sign-up form on your side bar
  - Every list service has a widget, plugin or code for adding a simple sign up form to your sidebar.
  - Get it up ASAP and start growing your list.
  
- ❑ If you aren't ready for a newsletter, at least get your RSS feed set up
  - There are articles and tutorials all around for coming up with a great layout.
  - MailChimp has a super simple drag and drop template.



# Notes



## Chapter 30

- ❑ Start thinking right now about what you want to offer
  - Decide what you have on your blog you could put together and make into a freebie
  - Don't over think this
  - Don't try to create something elaborate at this point
  - Your main goal is to offer it up on your site and start building your list
  
- ❑ Start a list of ideas you might want to offer in the future
  - Look around at what others offer
  - What do you like?
  - What might your readers respond well to?
  - Put this on your projects list and work on it a little at a time

## Notes



## You Did It!

Congratulations, you have created a recipe for success and your blog is better than ever.

Here are some things to remember as you move forward:

1. Baking times may vary - don't compare yourself to anyone else. Your success is custom made for you. Enjoy the journey.
2. Baking is a team sport - it takes a lot of people to make a blog a success. Start building your team ASAP for best results.
3. Waiting for the timer to ring is hard - don't be discouraged if you don't see immediate results. Keep moving forward!
4. Life marches on - Blogging is awesome and can be all consuming. Don't let your priorities get out of whack because of your blog. People matter more than posts.
5. Sometimes you have to start over from scratch - if it isn't working, let it go. Try as many times as you need to find your sweet spot. When you do your recipe will be perfect.

**You Can Do This!**





## Stay Encouraged & Keep Learning

At **DebiStangeland.com** you can keep your momentum going.

Visit the **blog** for free tools and helpful posts.

In addition, I welcome your reports as to how you are doing, questions you might have, and success stories you want to share. You can find me all over social media.

Facebook: **DebiStangelandBlog**

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If you would like to take your blog to the next level with 1-on-1 help I offer **blog coaching and consulting**. Together, we can get you headed in the right direction quickly and easily. Please contact me to schedule a time to talk. I want to see you succeed and would love to help you in this process.

**Thank you for reading!**