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Proem

From time-to-time readers and listeners ask me about my process for podcasting. Recently, Craig Constantine, a crony in podcasting, interviewed me about my podcasting journey. Craig's process is to record a 20-minute chat and publish it immediately without editing. For listeners, find a link to Craig's episode in the show notes. For readers, go [here](#). Why do I republish an already published episode? I learn from different styles of production. Remember that I co-published a couple of episodes in the past few months with Mighty Casey Quinlan's [Healthcare is Hilarious](#). I'll let you know my observations in the Reflections at the end.

Jumping into podcasting with both feet

Craig Constantine: Hello. I'm Craig Constantine.

Health Hats: Hi Craig, I'm Danny van Leeuwen. I'm also known as Health Hats, and I'm known as Health Hats because I am a person with multiple sclerosis. I've been a care partner to several family members' end-of-life journeys. I'm a nurse, and I have led several Electronic Health Record implementations, and I've been in the C-suite of healthcare. So, I wear a lot of hats.

Craig Constantine: Figuratively for sure and literally. Before we pressed record, we got into the topic of how you see podcasting as being a very rich experience for you. All the things that you get from it. And then we started talking about audio, and you mentioned how podcasting as an audio medium blends several different things that you're already passionate about. And I think it's super important to know, like you, you've also done a significant amount of blogging, and we also talked about how that's very unidirectional. I totally agree. I blog a lot, and it's very one way. And I get on my soapbox way too often. Craig does not need a megaphone. Do you recall what your experience was? So, you have a musical background. You're also a musician. And when you started podcasting and the first time you brought



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somebody else in and realized the power of having that second person engage in a conversation. Do you remember what that was like? And what sort of ideas came to mind from that opening?

Health Hats: My first episode was the anniversary of my son's death. And I had this video, a VHS video that my boss at the time had videoed an interview with my son at my 50th birthday two months before he died. I scraped the audio off that video and then told stories about our experience together, especially in his last couple of years. I didn't interview anybody in that first episode. But it was like, oh my God, I held my nose, I took a drink, and jumped right into the possibilities of audio. And I didn't add music until a few episodes in. I have a musician cousin, and I was talking to him, and he created some pieces for me to use. And so that opened up my mind to the possibilities of music and, oh my goodness, I'm a musician.

Following my nose 04:35

Craig Constantine: How did things become possible when you realize that you had, it's almost like a cubeville, like a giant old office space where you have all these cubes. When you stand up, it's like the whole everything is different. You just must go for it. When you stand up and look around, you suddenly realize that you had the space you were in. All these parameters are artificial. What is the thing that's currently like when you're creating your show? What's something that you're currently most curious about? Is it the other people? Is it the topics? Is it trying to succeed at a kind of communication?

Health Hats: Yes. I feel like it shifts. I'm in this business, healthcare, and am in this business about learning. And so, I follow my nose and whether I meet people who are, or I know interesting people. And so, it's just the individual. My first kick was a series with young adults with complex medical conditions transitioning from pediatric to adult medical care. And I interviewed a series of people, the young adult, or was a young adult, a parent, and then the two of them together, and I did a series. Then I did a series about chronic pain. So, it depends.

Ton of work, keeping it fresh and manageable 06:06

Craig Constantine: Do you okay. All right. You're a smart guy, and you do it a lot, and you're curious. So, one question I have is, yeah. How do you reign that there are only so many waking hours and you can only do so much stuff? So how do you reign that in? And I'm wondering if audio, oh, this has to fit in a podcast. Does that help you? I can't do that. That's a visual concept.

Health Hats: No, that's never come up, but what has come up is that I did have 145 weekly episodes and 500 weekly blog plus podcast episodes. And just recently decided that each episode takes from six to 30 hours to produce. And so first, I went to alternating interview and on mic episodes, and then recently, I shifted to giving myself two weeks to produce the interview episodes. It was getting to be a lot, just a lot. And so, I appreciate being able to take my time on the interview episodes. And I can play more music. So that's good.



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Craig Constantine: The mistress du jour eats all my time, and I go way down the rabbit hole. Are there any other things like either systems or mindsets or processes that you use when you find a new possibility to figure out do I want to pursue this possibility versus continue? If you did a thousand episodes the way you're going now, that would do a ton of good how do you decide whether just to keep doing what you're doing or whether to go in a new direction?

Ruthless editing 07:55

Health Hats: I don't know. I just do it. That's not the kind of thoughtfulness that I have. My thoughtfulness is more, what's the story I'm trying to tell. Each episode could be about 20 different things. That's just too much for listeners. What are the two or three that are important? And unlike you, who doesn't edit at all, I'm ruthless, or I'm learning to be a more and more ruthless editor. And I like the editing process. I'm a person whose brain works that I will have forgotten the whole conversation when I'm done talking to you. When I finished reading a book, I had forgotten the book. And so, the editing process allows me to open my brain and store that information differently and appreciate what just happened. "Oh, I didn't know that we talked about that." It's a new discussion. And I do at every episode. I do what I call an article grade transcript, which means that what I know is that at least half of my followers are not listeners they're reading. And I respect that. I started doing transcripts, but audio transcripts are not that interesting. We talk circular in fits and starts. It's not that readable. I do edit for readability, which has a bonus for me. My work is I have developed quite the library of material that, I had the, we'll have a consulting gig, and there's something that comes up well, I've already done that, and I can just pull that. I have the material, whether the product is written, auditory, or video. I've already done the work much of the time, which is helpful.

Process of telling a story 10:08

Craig Constantine: Glad to hear you talk about its written side because that's something I've started. Like I've done one out of hundreds of conversations that I have transcripts for. I suspect that I would get better at it. The more I do them, the more I think that's a brilliant way to think about how to integrate the learning. It's tough when you're recording; Only half of your mind is in the conversation. If you listen to it again while editing, that's one way to hear it, to be exposed to it a second time. But I'm curious about, so if you've written many articles, what are you thinking when you look at that transcript, and you're trying to change it into readable materials. You're going to change the voice entirely. What are you thinking as you're looking at that raw transcript? Do you imagine the reader? Is that not interesting enough, or are you trying to make the whole thing a coherent story? Like how does that process work?

Health Hats: That's a good question. My process is every episode has what I call a proem, which is like a preface, and a reflection. Which is me introducing the episode and then reflecting on the episode. So, I finished the episode and then it's time for me then some time goes on because I have quite a queue and I'll go back, and I'll listen to the raw file, and then I'll write, I'll start to write the proem, or I might start writing it and even before I listen.

Craig Constantine: Because it falls out of your head?



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Health Hats: And it falls out of my head. And it helps me then to shape what are, what is the story here? What's my story here. Like, why do I care? Why did I even do this? And I'm a storyteller. So, I've got a million stories. So, I try to get a sense of why this topic, why this person, you know what touched a nerve in me? And then I do my editing. Then I go through it and try to break it up into pieces and give things temporary heading. And then that's the way for me to be a ruthless editor because then I can take out sections. And then I go through it and then just put my editor hat on because I spent 15 years as an editor of a journal, and now, I'm on the editorial team of another journal. And so, I'm used to editing. And then I edit, just clean it up, remove the passive, and just make it crisper so that when a person reads it, they'll want to keep reading it. So that's like what I do.

Craig Constantine: Thank you for sharing that. It's just me being selfish. That's super helpful to help me find cause I'm like almost everything you're describing. That sounds hard to do because I've tried to do it and I'm like, okay, keep, just keep doing it.

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Grateful for the podcasting communities 13:56

Health Hats: Well, the other piece of that is that I am in TPF2 (The Second Podcasting Fellowship). That's been more than three years, and we have a weekly call where we talk all things podcasting and life. And then, I host an every other week critique group, where we critique each other's episodes and do two every call every other week. And so that's where I learn a lot about the art of this media with this small group of people with whom we'd been working for a lot of years. I see what they do and, with Steve's group, I'm the only healthcare person, which is great. And everybody's got such different styles. I steal stuff all the time, and they help me work through dilemmas and answer the questions you're asking because they come up. Of course.

Craig Constantine: I'm just like so happy to hear anybody ever talk about doing the hard work of bringing there's an experiential part to experiencing the people on the podcast when one is listening, and then there's that other part where it says, okay, that's great. But now, I want to get from that, I went to hang in my head new information, and I think the written form is better for that. Even people who say they're an auditory learner maybe just haven't encountered enough well-written material.

Honoring different brains 15:48

Health Hats: No, we all have different brains. One of my sons is an auditory learner, and he's been that way all his life. Still, he's a prolific reader. Anyway, I think it's amazing how different people's brains are. And so, I feel I wear all these different hats, and my audience has many different hats, so I have people



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who identify as patients. I have people follow me identifying as caregivers, knowledge management professionals, clinicians, administrators, or policymakers. And I like to think about all those different brains and, I have this image of a shelf of bobbleheads above my screen where I see Mary Sue there's Susan, there's Michael. I'm picturing them. So, I make sure that I am talking to each of them—now, being a Rosetta stone of healthcare. I say on my lead that I know a bit of a lot of healthcare and not a lot about that much. But I try to speak to each of them. And that includes people who are readers, who I know are readers. I know that Sue is only reading me. She has no idea about the music that's in the podcast. No clue because she's just reading me, and she'll never listen to my podcast. I just know. But hey, she's been following me for seven years. And so, I honor her.

Craig Constantine: Yeah. I think there's deep magic you've got there. I'm very intentional about thinking about what I'm doing in the audio part. Still, I feel that if I were more intentional about going back through and finding the pieces like you're doing that would serve a written learner or a reader, that would help me as much as it would help the people who are readers. So, I think you're absolutely onto something. And I am really glad you shared all that. I think that's very helpful. I don't know if I may also be out there listening, finds it helpful, but I find it super helpful. So, thank you as much as I hate to say it. That's 20 minutes. I'm sure.

Health Hats: Here we go. Great. Thanks. Yeah. Thank you so much for sharing you. You're doing a mitzvah here, so I really appreciate it all the work that you do. So, thank you.

Craig Constantine: I'm mostly crazy excited to see that people like. My greatest giggle fits happen. When people grab something I've created and then build do their own thing with it. Whoa, I didn't expect them to do that. That's how I know Lego blocks I threw up and it goes on the floor or on the table and people grab them. I'm like, yes. Okay. Lego, this is a win. Cool. Anyway, thanks for taking the time. I know how hard it is to schedule. Thanks Danny. Take care of yourself.

Reflection 18:49

For this episode, I've listened, transcribed, edited audio and written for about five hours over 3 days - much less than usual for me, more than zero for Craig. My software platforms include Zoom, Audacity, Descript, Auphonic, and WordPress. I'll spend another couple hours on show notes, a video trailer on YouTube, and disseminating on various platforms, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, a seven Facebook pages. I have help from Kayla Nelson, my social media and web coach, and Joey van Leeuwen's music. I have a sponsor. One process is not better than another. It depends on topic, purpose, audience, intent, and inertia. Now you've seen a bit of how the sausage is made. Next time I'll have an interview with Matthew Hudson about embedded researchers. Be well. Onward.



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