Module #7: Blog Pages: Services, Products, and Recommendations

In this week's module, we're taking a look at some important pages you might create for your blog. We'll start off by discussing the difference between *posts* and *pages*, then we'll take a look at three types of pages you might create.

If you're selling something to your readers, a Services or Products page makes sense – and even if you're not yet selling something, you might want to consider this for the future. If you're running a hobbyist blog where you don't intend to make money, a Recommended Resources page is a great option.

We're covering a lot of ground in this module, and I'm going to run through things fairly quickly. If there's anything you're unsure about, or if you want more advice on a particular area, just ask in our Facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/blogonspring2018

(Or feel free to email me – ali@aliventures.com.)

What's the Difference Between a Post and a Page?

WordPress, and other blogging platforms, allow you to create both "posts" and "pages".

If you're new to blogging, it might not be clear why "pages" exist at all, or you might think it doesn't matter whether you publish content as a post or a page.

There are some important differences, though, and I wanted to cover those before we get further into the module. (If you're already confident about the difference between posts and pages, feel free to skip this section!)

A post is a piece of dated content that appears in your list of blog posts. Normally, posts show up in reverse chronological order (most recent first) on your homepage, or on a dedicated "blog" page.

Your posts will also appear in your blog's archives, if you have an archive list, and in your category lists (if you click on a category's name on your blog, you should see all the posts in that category).

A page is undated content that does *not* appear in your list of blog posts. You won't see it on your homepage, in your archive, or in your categories list. (Pages don't have a category.)

Depending on your blog's setup, the title of your page might automatically appear in your navigation menu, or you might have to add it yourself.

So why do these two different types of content exist?

Most of what you publish on your blog will be regular content: posts that you put out there every week or month.

Sometimes, though, you'll want to publish more "static" content – something that it doesn't really make sense to fix to a particular date. We've already covered Contact pages (Module 3) and About pages (Module 5), which are great examples.

If you're feeling puzzled about anything here, or if you're unsure whether to publish a particular piece of content as a post or a page, just ask in the Facebook group:

www.facebook.com/groups/blogonspring2018

Now that you're (hopefully!) clear about posts and pages, here's a big question to ask yourself:

Should You Sell a Service or a Product to Your Readers?

Back in Module 1, we looked at your reasons for blogging. If an important reason for you is to make money, then you'll almost certainly need a services or products page in order to do that.

Even if making money isn't your main motivator, having a services or products page still might make sense. For instance, if you blog in order to raise your profile in your niche, writing a book to sell could help you look more credible.

You might have been thinking about making money through affiliate links (promoting other people's products) or through running ads on your blog. While those are both possible options, for most bloggers, selling products and/or services directly is a much faster way to make a steady income.

Selling your own product or service means that:

- You'll be getting 100% of the profit.
- Readers will be more engaged with your blog – rather than leaving your site (after clicking an advert or an affiliate link).
- Readers will be more likely to buy (whereas they might not be interested in affiliate promotions). They trust you and like your blog already.

"Services" and "products" can cover a huge range of different things, and we'll be going through some examples as we work through this module. We're going to tackle services pages first, then products pages, so I thought it'd be helpful to take a look at how they differ.

Services involve your direct input. For instance, if you're a photographer, you might offer photo shoots: you need to be physically present! If you're a writer, you might offer freelance copywriting.

Products take time to create, but then can be purchased with little or no input from you. For instance, if you're an author, you might spend a year writing a novel – but then hundreds of people can buy it at any time of the day or night. You don't need to get involved in the sales process.

Neither is "better" or "worse": services allow you to start making money straight away (rather than spending hours creating something up-front) – but products are more scalable (you could sell 100 books in a day).

We're going to look at services first, going through some examples of services pages and how to write yours, then we're going to dig into products.

> **Note:** If you have no interest at all in offering a service or selling a product at this point in time, that's fine! Skip to the section on "Recommended Resources pages", which begins on page 22 of this module.

Choosing a Service to Offer

What sort of service could you provide?

You might already have something in mind – or you might well already be underway with coaching, freelancing, or some other type of service.

If not, though, there are plenty of possibilities. If you're a writer, for instance, you might consider:

- **Copywriting:** producing advertising copy for businesses – these could be tiny or huge
- **Article writing:** writing for magazines or blogs
- **Editing or proofreading:** taking someone else's writing and helping to shape and polish it – this could be anything from a blog post to a novel
- **Coaching:** if you're already an established writer, or have a particular area of writing expertise

Coaching and consulting can work in many different areas: the bloggers I know include a life coach (Tim Brownson), a business / executive coach (Barry Demp), a coach for tiny businesses (Naomi Dunford), a coach for academics (Jo VanEvery) and many more!

You might want to spend a bit of time brainstorming some ideas. Ask yourself:

- What services could I offer?
- Which of these would I enjoy doing?

If you're already promoting a service, you might think about:

- Is there a way I could change this to make it an even better fit for me / my readers?
- Is there something else I'd like to offer as well as (or instead of) this service?

Creating a Services Page

Once you've decided what you're going to offer to your audience, you need to tell them about it! That's where your Services page comes in.

Your Services page might be called "Services", but it could be called something quite different – e.g. "Freelance Writing" or "Coaching" or "What I Do" or "How Can I Help You?"

The title on the page itself doesn't necessarily have to match what you have in your navigation menu.

Whatever you call it, there are a few key elements you'll want to include … and you might find it helpful to draft or outline these bit by bit before you create the page itself:

- A clear, high-level statement of what you do
- Your (relevant) qualifications or experience
- An explanation of who you work with
- Clear descriptions of each service you offer
- What your services cost

I know all of that might look a bit daunting (worse than writing an About page, even!) Don't worry – we're going to run through each of these and take a look at some examples of what other bloggers are doing.

The examples we'll be using are:

Jane Friedman's "Publishing Consultant" page
(labelled as "Work with Jane" in the navigation)

Charlie Gilkey's "Services" page

Joel Friedlander's "Consulting" page

Jo Van Every's "Services" page

We'll only be looking at small parts of each of these pages, but if you have time, do read them in full. Each one works a bit differently, and all are good examples of ways in which you might set up a Services page.

Element #1: A Clear, High-Level Statement of What You Do

It can be helpful to have a short, clear statement about what you do near the start of your Services page. Imagine someone has clicked on your Services page with only a very hazy idea of who you are (perhaps a friend sent them there).

Jane Friedman's "Publishing Consultant" page, for instance, starts like this:

> **Publishing Consultant**
>
> With more than 20 years of experience in the business of publishing and media, I can help you make smart decisions about your publishing and digital media strategy, and position you for long-term growth.

This is a clear, direct statement about what Jane offers (neatly incorporating her key credentials). It's also obvious from this – and from the list of services she offers, which appears beneath it – that she works with self-publishing authors.

Element #2: Your Relevant Qualifications or Experience

Hopefully, you've got some qualifications or experience that relate to the service you offer. (If not, you might want to have a rethink about what you're providing…)

You don't need to give a long list of qualifications here, or exhaustively detail every single project you've worked on in the past … but you do need to make it clear to your potential clients that you know what you're talking about. Here's a good example from Charlie Gilkey's "Services" page:

> I've worked with hundreds of business owners, leaders, and entrepreneurs on exactly those areas of focus. I help people build businesses that work better – for them, their teammates, their customers, and their ecosystems.
>
> Along the way, I've written a best-selling book that shows how to navigate the different life cycles of business growth, given scores of presentations to business owners in a variety of settings, and shared strategies, methods, and techniques for making better businesses.

Charlie explains what he does, and how much experience he has doing it (he's worked with "hundreds" of people and given "scores" of presentations).

You might not have Charlie's years of experience yet … but you could still talk about things like:

- Any relevant qualifications (e.g. your degree)
- Work you've done in the past (many freelancers will link to pieces as part of a portfolio)
- Your hands-on experience (for instance, if you coach parents and you have five kids, that's definitely worth mentioning!)

Remember that something that might seem fairly ordinary or mundane to you could be quite impressive to someone else.

Element #3: An Explanation of Who You Work With

Your Services page should make it clear who you work with. You might do this explicitly ("I help small business owners create great content for their blogs") or you might do it by writing to the potential client as "you".

Here's what Joel Friedlander does on his Consulting page:

> - Are you thinking about publishing your own book?
>
> - Do you want to get in on this work-at-home business but don't know how?
>
> - Do you have a book you think will sell but don't know what to do with it?
>
> - Do you want to become a print on demand publisher but you're holding back because the way it works is very confusing?

Bullet points can be very effective on Services pages (and any type of page where you're selling something) as they let people skim and instantly pick out the parts that are relevant to them.

Using bullet points doesn't mean dumbing down, either. Jo Van Every uses them on her Services page to take a look at some quite complex struggles that her potential clients might be facing:

- You want to be writing more and aren't sure how you find the time to do that given all the other demands.

- You are approaching burnout and realize there must be a more sustainable way to walk this path.

- You are under pressure to increase your research activity in some specific way and you struggle to see how to meet those demands.

- You feel uncomfortable with the things you "should" be doing but aren't quite sure what that means or how to articulate the discomfort, much less an alternative.

- You are wondering if this is all there is. The vision you had isn't serving you any more and you're not sure where to go next.

Element #4: A Clear Description of Each Service

You might only offer one service, in which case this is fairly straightforward: tell readers what you do!
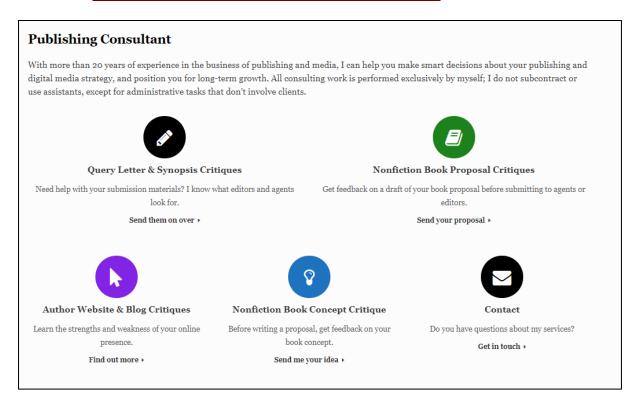
Joel Friedlander does this in his typically straightforward fashion on his Consulting page, where he sells a single service (with a 30 / 60 minute option).

Here's what you'll get:

- Analysis of your book or your concept, if you don't have a manuscript yet
- Recommendations of how to produce your book, including specific vendor referrals
- Cost estimate of your book production
- Either a 30- or a 60-minute phone consultation in which we'll address all your questions. Afterward, I'll send you an MP3 recording of our conversation so you can review it any time you want. That way you don't have to get distracted by taking notes while we're talking.
- You'll also get a "plain talk" evaluation of your book or concept. No fluff and no flattery, just an informed opinion that gives you specific things you can do to move to the next step in your publishing journey.

Of course, many bloggers end up offering several different services, or different packages: if that's you, you'll need to give at least brief details of what each of these involves.

It'll often make sense to create a separate page for each service – so your main "Services" page acts a bit like an introduction or an index. This is very much the case with Jane Friedman's "Publishing Consultant" page:

Publishing Consultant

With more than 20 years of experience in the business of publishing and media, I can help you make smart decisions about your publishing and digital media strategy, and position you for long-term growth. All consulting work is performed exclusively by myself; I do not subcontract or use assistants, except for administrative tasks that don't involve clients.

Query Letter & Synopsis Critiques

Need help with your submission materials? I know what editors and agents look for.

Send them on over ›

Nonfiction Book Proposal Critiques

Get feedback on a draft of your book proposal before submitting to agents or editors.

Send your proposal ›

Author Website & Blog Critiques

Learn the strengths and weakness of your online presence.

Find out more ›

Nonfiction Book Concept Critique

Before writing a proposal, get feedback on your book concept.

Send me your idea ›

Contact

Do you have questions about my services?

Get in touch ›

Element #5: What Your Services Cost

You don't *have* to include your pricing on your Services page. Many people don't, particularly if they have a complicated scale of fees or if they'll need to customize their quote to each specific project.

If you have a standard service, though (like an hour-long coaching call on Skype), it makes sense to give the price up-front. If you don't, people may assume it's going to be too expensive … or they may contact you expecting it to be cheap, and waste your time trying to bargain you down.

Here's how Joel Friedlander explains his pricing:

> The cost is $350 for a 60-minute consultation, or $175 for a 30-minute consultation. Compare that to the $2,000 – $50,000 paid by competitive self-publishing authors to get their books into print. Having the right plan in place can make a huge difference.

If you can't give an exact price, it might make sense to give a range. E.g. "I normally charge $60 - $90 for a 1,000 word blog post, depending on how much research is required."

When it comes to taking payment, the easiest way is to set up a PayPal account. You can either create a button on your page that people can click to pay or you can let them get in touch with you first, then send them a "money request" or a more formal invoice.

Your customers can pay with a credit card through PayPal, without needing a PayPal account, in most cases.

What Tone Should You Use for Your Services Page?

You'll want your services page to be in keeping with the rest of your blog (so don't make it very stuffy and formal if you're normally incredibly laid back in your writing style). It's important, though, that you're as clear as possible, and that you sound confident!

If you get stuck, here are a few phrases and sentences you might like to try:

> *I'm an experienced …*
>
> *I can help you to …*
>
> *When you hire me, you don't just get [basic description of your service]. You also get someone who'll [explain how you can go further].*
>
> *Most of my clients are …*
>
> *If you are …*
>
> *I work with …*

> *My services include …*
>
> *As well as the above services, I'm happy to put together a custom package to suit your needs. Just drop me an email and let me know what you're thinking of.*

Obviously, it's important to proofread and watch out for typos – especially if you're offering any kind of writing-related service.

I highly recommend asking someone to read through the page, so that they can point out any areas which weren't clear. Something that seems obvious to you might not be at all obvious to a potential client.

Feel free to share your draft Services page in the Facebook group, so we can give you some feedback.

Creating a Products Page

Note: you might hear this type of page called a "landing page" or "sales page".

If you're selling a product, rather than a service, there are a few things you'll be doing differently.

Your focus will be on what the customer will get rather than on what you can offer. Your qualifications and experience still matter – but you might not need to mention them particularly prominently, depending on what type of product you've created.

Another key difference is that, with services, you'll normally be handling payments yourself. When you're selling a product, there'll almost always be a third party involved.

For instance, if you're an author, your Products page might link to your books on Amazon – where your customers can buy them. Even if you sell ebooks through your own site (like I do with my Blogger's Guides), you'll need a way for customers to get the file even if they buy in the middle of the night. I use Payhip to handle payments and deliver the Blogger's Guide files.

Products pages vary a lot, depending on what you're selling. A novelist with a dozen books out there will have a very different products page from someone selling a self-study ecourse about blogging.

I'm sure it goes without saying, but actually calling your page "Products" will probably look a bit weird! If you have several products, something like "Shop", "Store", or "Books" should work. For individual products, you can just title their pages with the title of the product itself.

Generally, you'll need a separate page for each product, giving full details, plus (if you have more than two products) your main "Products" page that links to them all.

What Product Might You Sell?

At this point, you might already have a particular product – or even several products – lined up to sell. (Or you might be actively working on them.) Maybe you're an author, and you're blogging to promote your books, for instance.

"Products" can be either digital or physical.

Digital products can be supplied electronically, as a download. They might be ebooks, worksheets, audio files, videos … anything that can be sent over the internet.

Physical products are ones that have to be sent to a customer's mailing address. They could be almost anything, from paperback books to individually hand-crafted items. (Physical products might also contain the same content as digital ones: think ebooks vs paperback books, or MP3 downloads vs CDs.)

Digital products are easiest to get started with, because you don't have to keep inventory (or pay someone else to) and you don't have the same overheads as with physical products.

However, it could make sense to begin with a physical product if you want to sell something like handcrafted goods (probably via Etsy).

You might want to start brainstorming some product ideas before we move on. **What could you sell from *your* blog? What would your audience find useful?**

We're going to look at a couple of different products pages in this part of the module:

The "Creating Character Arcs" page on Helping Writers Become Authors

The "How to Market a Book" page on The Creative Penn (and the "Books" page)

I'm going to pull out specific examples from these pages, but if you've got time, I recommend reading through both of them to see how they're put together.

Creating a Product Page for a Single Product

Each of your products should normally have its own separate page, so customers can get details about that specific product – rather than having to scroll down a long page that lists all your products.

(When you're starting out, you probably only have one product anyway!)

There's no one "right" way to structure your page, but normally, you'll want the following elements at some point:

- An explanation of what your product is
- A brief summary of your credentials
- Bullet points explaining the key benefits of your product
- The price of your product, plus a "buy" button

Element #1: An Explanation of What Your Product Is

Unless it's super-obvious, make sure you explain what your product actually *is* at some point on your page. If there are multiple options for buying it (e.g. book vs ebook; one-off vs monthly subscription), make that clear too.

You can potentially do this with a single sentence or even just a few words. For instance, on Joanna Penn's page for her book How to Market a Book, she has:

> Buy now in ebook, print or audiobook format!

Element #2: A Brief Summary of Your Credentials

On a page about your services, your qualifications and experience matter quite a lot because that's essentially what someone's buying from you!
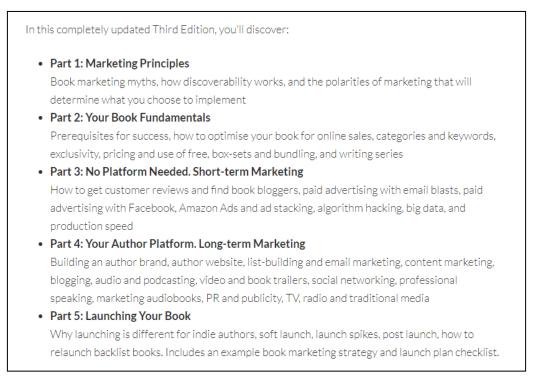
With products, the product itself is what they're interested in – but your credentials for creating or writing it do still matter.

You don't have to go into a lot of detail (assuming that you have more information about who you are elsewhere on your site, like on your About page). For instance, K.M. Weiland has this on her Creating Character Arcs page:

Internationally published, award-winning novelist K.M. Weiland shares her acclaimed method for achieving memorable and moving character arcs in every book you write.

Element #3: Bullet Points Explaining the Key Benefits of Your Product
Bullet points are easy for readers to skim and they can be a great way to give an overview of what your book includes, or what your product involves.

Here's how Joanna Penn does it:

In this completely updated Third Edition, you'll discover:

- **Part 1: Marketing Principles**
  Book marketing myths, how discoverability works, and the polarities of marketing that will determine what you choose to implement
- **Part 2: Your Book Fundamentals**
  Prerequisites for success, how to optimise your book for online sales, categories and keywords, exclusivity, pricing and use of free, box-sets and bundling, and writing series
- **Part 3: No Platform Needed. Short-term Marketing**
  How to get customer reviews and find book bloggers, paid advertising with email blasts, paid advertising with Facebook, Amazon Ads and ad stacking, algorithm hacking, big data, and production speed
- **Part 4: Your Author Platform. Long-term Marketing**
  Building an author brand, author website, list-building and email marketing, content marketing, blogging, audio and podcasting, video and book trailers, social networking, professional speaking, marketing audiobooks, PR and publicity, TV, radio and traditional media
- **Part 5: Launching Your Book**
  Why launching is different for indie authors, soft launch, launch spikes, post launch, how to relaunch backlist books. Includes an example book marketing strategy and launch plan checklist.

You don't necessarily need to give a full list of everything that's included: depending on your product, a list of the key highlights might be fine.
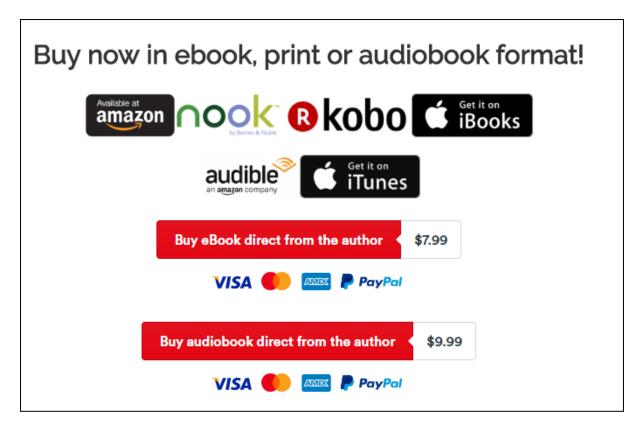
K.M. Weiland has this:

> This comprehensive book will teach you:
>
> - How to determine which arc—positive, negative, or flat—is right for your character.
> - Why you should NEVER pit plot against character. Instead, learn how to blend story structure and character development.
> - How to recognize and avoid the worst pitfalls of writing novels without character arcs.
> - How to hack the secret to using overarching character arcs to create amazing trilogies and series.
> - And much more!

Element #4: The Price of Your Product, Plus a "Buy" Button

When you're offering services, you don't *have* to give the price, though I'd recommend it. With a product, though, you definitely need to tell people how much it costs.

Sometimes, it makes sense to include the price next to a "buy" button: this is what Joanna Penn and K.M. Weiland do. This works for something that's a low, fairly standard price, like a book – readers aren't going to get to this point and suddenly be shocked at how much it costs.

(from Joanna Penn's How to Market a Book page)

(from K.M. Weiland's Creating Character Arcs page)

If you have a product that's something a bit more unusual, like a downloadable premium ebook with worksheets and printables, you'll probably want to mention the price a bit earlier on the page to help put it into context.

Creating a "Shop" or "Store" Page for Multiple Products

If you have several different products to sell, it makes sense to create a "Shop" or "Store" page where you can list them all. You don't need to go into much detail about your products on this page – some authors with lots of books, for instance, just give the covers. Each product in the Shop / Store should be linked to a more detailed page, though.

(from Joanna Penn's Books page)

Once you have more than a couple of products, I think it makes sense to list them together on one page and have one link in the navigation menu.

If you just have one or two products, you can simply give them a page each, and link to those pages in your navigation.

Testimonials and Reviews

One huge area that we haven't covered yet is that of testimonials and reviews – other people's words about your services or products.

When you're just starting out with a particular product or service, you probably won't have any testimonials or reviews yet! That's fine, but it's a good idea to encourage some as soon as possible – they'll really make a difference to your sales.

Testimonials vs Reviews: What's the Difference?

A testimonial is something nice someone says about you, your service or your product. You probably emailed them asking them if they'd write one, and they obliged! You then published their words on your website or Amazon page.

A review might also be something nice, but it could potentially be critical. You may or may not have solicited it. On sites like Amazon, customers can publish reviews without your consent or involvement.

Getting Testimonials

The best way to get a testimonial is to ... ask. Let's say you write blog posts for clients. If you've already done this work for someone (even for free), ask them to write you a testimonial.

Whenever I've asked for testimonials, people have been overwhelmingly happy to oblige. But in ten years of working for myself, I don't think anyone's ever emailed with a testimonial out of the blue! It's just not something that people tend to think of doing, unless you ask.

If someone's already written something that might work as a testimonial (like a "thank you!" email to you), you can ask their permission to quote from it on your site.

Getting Reviews

If you've written a book, particularly if it's a novel, short story collection or book of poetry, then it'd be a bit weird to ask for a testimonial. You can ask for an honest review, though; most authors will offer a free copy in exchange for this.

Once you have reviews on Amazon or Goodreads (or wherever your books are listed / sold), you can quote from them on your website and in your marketing materials.

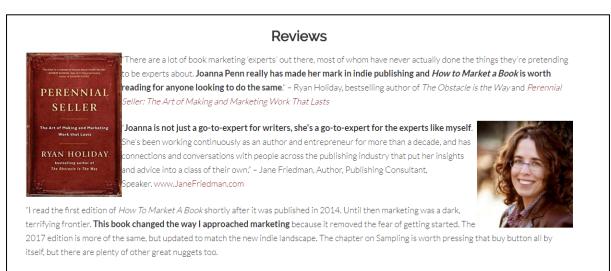## Using Testimonials and Reviews on Your Site

Different bloggers display testimonials and reviews in a wide variety of ways … and it's up to you exactly how you use yours.

These are just a few things you might want to keep in mind:

- With testimonials (that typically aren't published elsewhere), it's a great idea to link to the person's Twitter profile or website, to help prove they exist! If the person gives permission, you could also use their photograph.
- With Amazon reviews or Goodreads reviews that you're quoting on your website, you might want to link to the original.
- If you have a *lot* of testimonials, you might want to have a specific page on your site for them, or you might want to select different ones for different pages (e.g. you could include a testimonial on your About page, if your main aim is to encourage potential clients to hire you).

Here are a few examples of testimonials and reviews in action, from some of the sites we've looked at in this module:

Example #1: From **How to Market a Book**, Joanna Penn, The Creative Penn

Joanna includes lots of reviews on her page (which are more like testimonials, really, because many of them focus on Joanna herself rather than the book). She's included images of the reviewers' books, or photos of them, to help add visual interest and to prove that these people exist!

She's also put key sentences in bold – which is a good move when you have a lot of reviews or testimonials.

Example #2: From Query Letter and Synopsis Critiques, Jane Friedman, JaneFriedman.com

On Jane's pages about her individual services, she includes testimonials down the right-hand side:

This helps the testimonials to stand out – without having them interrupt the text of the page itself. Linking to people's websites and books (where available) helps to show that the testimonials are authentic, too.

Example #3: From **3x Your Business without 10x'ing Your Headaches**, Charlie Gilkey, Productive Flourishing

Like Joanna, Charlie includes images of the various people giving the testimonials, and puts key points in bold. He includes the URLs of websites as text (not as links): I suspect this is a deliberate choice to show that these people exist, without distracting readers who might click on the links!

The images are all the same width and all on the left-hand side of the testimonials, which I think makes this section look quite neat (I'd personally like a bit more whitespace in between the testimonials, though).

Creating a Recommended Resources Page

Finally – I know this has been a long module! – we come to the Recommended Resources page.

This is a great page for almost any type of blog, whether you're aiming to make money, build a reputation, or simply enjoy blogging as a hobby. It will be:

- Useful for your readers – helping them find resources that they'd enjoy.
- A good way to showcase your knowledge of your topic area.
- Potentially a way to bring in money (if you're using affiliate links).

The one drawback to a Recommended Resources page is that it points people away from your site.

Once your blog gets quite large, with a number of services / products of your own, you might prefer to remove the link to your Recommended Resources page from your menu or sidebar to keep the focus on your own products.

What Does a "Recommended Resources" Page Look Like?

Your Recommended Resources page is essentially a list of books / blogs / software / etc (whatever's appropriate for your topic area) that you recommend.

Depending on the length of your list and how you want to arrange your page, you might:

- Divide your list into different sections (e.g. blogs separately from books).
- Use images – e.g. book covers – in addition to, or instead of, text.
- Give a brief review or summary of the different resources.

Here's a straightforward example, from Jane Friedman's Recommended Resources page:

Recommended Resources

Updated April 2018

I've probably read, reviewed, or at least seen every single advice book, website, and service for writers. I could recommend dozens of resources, but I'll focus on the most helpful for early-career writers.

The Best of My Advice

- For free: Jane's Writing Advice Archive
- In book form: *The Business of Being a Writer*
- Learn about my paid services.

Also, I've created a list of my favorite books on writing and publishing.

High-Level Editing and Coaching

- Writer and editor Andi Cumbo offers a wide range of budget-friendly services for all types of writers. I recommend her manuscript review, where you can get big-picture feedback before investing in a comprehensive editing job.
- Nell Boeschenstein is a creative writing professor and extensively published freelancer who offers editing and coaching services for nonfiction writers—including memoir, family history, and narrative nonfiction.
- Whether you're writing a novel, seeking a ghostwriter, or looking to publish a book from your nonfiction expertise, Stuart Horwitz of Book Architecture can help.

(Note that you don't need to call your page "Recommended Resources" – it could be something like "My Favourite Books" or "Reviews".)

Using Affiliate Links

If your main reason for blogging is to make money, I don't recommend using affiliate links as your main focus – you'll need a lot of readers to bring in money that way. But there's no reason not to use them at all!

Even if you're not particularly interested in making money blogging, you might find it's useful to include affiliate links to make a little bit of money – it can offset your hosting costs, or allow you to justify buying a premium theme for your blog.

What is an Affiliate Link?

An affiliate link is a special link (URL) to a product or service page, e.g. a book's sales page on Amazon.

When someone follows that link, they're "tagged" with your affiliate ID. This means that any purchases they make are credited to you. You'll receive a percentage of what they spend – this could be 5% or less on Amazon, or 50% or more on some bloggers' digital products or online courses. For instance, I offer 50% commission on my Blogger's Guides.

To get the special affiliate link, you'll need to sign up for an affiliate program. This might be through a big site like Amazon, or through a third-party retailer like Payhip or E-junkie – these allow bloggers to sell products.

What Should You Include on Your Recommended Resources List?

Unless you're framing your list as reviews – in which case it might be appropriate to review things you *didn't* like as well as ones you did! – you should only recommend resources that you've (a) used yourself and (b) liked.

Most affiliate programmes allow you to sign up without having bought the product or service in question – but I'd caution against recommending things that you haven't tried out first-hand.

To start creating a Recommended Resources list, I'd suggest thinking about these questions. Keep in mind that your resources should be on-topic for your blog, so if you write a blog about parenting, it's unlikely to make sense to recommend a web hosting company!

- What books have you read and enjoyed? You could list those and link to them on Amazon. (You might want to write a short review or summary, too, but you don't have to.)
- What online tools have you used – like apps or websites?
- Is there any equipment that you'd recommend? (E.g. if I blogged about parenting, there are lots of things I could recommend – from bottles and weaning spoons to our kids' favourite toys!)
- What blogs do you regularly read?

Your list doesn't need to be long. You can easily add to and update it over time – and a very long list will probably be overwhelming for readers, anyway.

Module #7: Recap

I know this module has covered a lot of ground! Please don't feel that you need to rush to create the perfect Services / Product / Recommended page straight away – you can always make some notes at this stage and return to the module when you're ready.

Here's a summary of what we covered in this week's module:

- **Selling your own services and/or products is the fastest way to make money from your blog.** Services will bring in money more quickly, with less upfront work – but products are more scalable.
- **Service pages can look very different from one another**. What matters is that they clearly explain what you offer, who you work with, and what people will get.
- **Individual product pages should explain what your product is and how much it costs**. You'll need to give readers a link to buy the product, too (whether that's directly from you or from a site like Amazon or Etsy).
- **If you have three or more products, it makes sense to bring them together on a "Shop" page** (or "Store", "Books", etc). You can list your products, potentially give brief details about each, and link to their more detailed page.
- **Recommended Resources pages** can be a great fit for almost any type of blog. They're simple to put together, you can add to them over time, and you can use them as a source of income (through affiliate links).

There's been a lot to take in here, particularly if you're looking at creating your first Services or Products page. If you're stuck at any point, do come and ask for help in our Facebook group:

facebook.com/groups/blogonspring2018

Module #7 Assignment and Check In

This week, your assignment is to draft a Services, Product, or Recommended Resources page.

Once you've written your page, or got as far as you're going to get, check in here to get your reward card stamped:

facebook.com/groups/blogon.spring2018/permalink/250922302353289

If you're publishing your page, do share the link to your page with us, so we can check it out. If it's just a draft for now, feel free to upload it to the Facebook group as a Word document, .pdf or whatever suits you.

If you prefer not to use Facebook, email me with "Check in" in the subject line.

Don't forget, you need to check in by the end of **Sunday 15th July**. (It's fine to check in even if you haven't finished drafting your page.)

Module #7: Recommended Further Reading

All of the further reading is optional, but if you want to find out more about something we've covered in the module, it's highly recommended! If you find other useful resources, you're welcome to share them in our Facebook group.

The Differences Between Posts and Pages in WordPress, Bon Dunn, BobWP

This post gives a great summary of the difference between pages and posts, with screenshots highlighting the key technical differences. If you're still feeling a bit unsure how posts and pages work, give it a read.

How to Write a Sales Page that Converts Like Crazy, Sharon Hurley Hall, OptinMonster

This is a long, in-depth post about sales pages (geared towards products, but a lot of this would also apply to selling a service) – you might want to skim read it at this point, but it's a good one to bookmark to come back to as you add more products or services to your website.

How to Create a Killer Resource Page (That's Crazy Profitable), Matt McWilliams, MattMcWilliams.com

While this is very much geared towards bloggers using their Resources page to generate affiliate income, there are useful tips here whatever type of blogging you do – and examples of resources pages that Matt thinks are working well.

What's Coming Up Next Week:
Module #8: Creating a Content Calendar Packed with Great Ideas

Our final week, from Monday 16th July, is all about setting you up for a great few weeks of blogging *after* Blog On! You'll learn about content calendars and how to create yours.

Along the way, you'll be coming up with ideas, figuring out which ones will work best, and writing brief plans so you can test out your idea before committing to writing about it.