

# Arabah Joy

## showcasing His glory

Before You Begin:

I began blogging in 2010 with no direction or goals, just a passion to write and share deeper things from my heart. Although I quickly gained a small loyal reader base, I knew my blog had the potential to be much more- and reach many more people- than it was.

Problem was, I wasn't sure how to grow into that potential, especially without losing the heart and integrity of my message.

Over the years, I've learned some key strategies and found a few essential tools that have served me well. These helped me go from 10K monthly page views to 150K in just a few months time... and now, my page views are much more than that.

Below I'm sharing the **top 10 tools** that have transformed my blogging. I highly recommend them to you as well!

I do need to say that none of the products in this document were selected because of their affiliate program and I never recommend a product or service solely on it's affiliate program. These are products I use and ones that have brought me great return on my investment. That being said, many of the links in this document are affiliate links (if the resource I use and love has an affiliate program, I've signed up for it.) Affiliate programs allow me to run my site without ads or sponsored posts {for which I am SO thankful!!}

Okay, let's talk about something we both love: blogging!

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# 10 TOOLS

## that Transformed My Blogging

### 1. Host Gator

Having the right host for your blog is critical. I can't tell you the countless number of bloggers I've heard from who signed up for a hosting service (Bluehost in particular!), only to panic when their site went down for no apparent reason or a blog post went viral, pushing them over their bandwidth allowance which shut them down. Friend, you don't need that!

I've been with [Host Gator](#) since I started and they have provided reliable service, great customer support, unmetered bandwidth... **plus they guarantee 99.9% uptime!** All for under \$5 a month. You can't beat that! [See for yourself](#) why I highly recommend them.

### 2. Elite Blog Academy

**The hand's down best thing I've ever done for my blog is taking Ruth Soukup's [Elite Blog Academy](#).**

In this course, I learned how to blog strategically, grow my pageviews (I went from 10K a month to over 150K a month in just a few months), and monetize my site. EBA is only open a few days each year and enrollment is extremely limited... but if you [sign up](#) to be notified when it opens, Ruth will send you her free blog guide. PLUS, she periodically sends amazing free training that will revolutionize the way you blog if you sign up. Signing up (regardless of whether you buy or not) is a no-brainer! I consume everything Ruth puts out. It's just that good.

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## 3. Board Booster

Totally in love with this tool! [Board Booster](#) basically eliminated my need to be on Pinterest. Well, almost. I spend about 30 minutes a week there yet receive tens of thousands of visitors from Pinterest for that half hour each week... all thanks to Board Booster. This little tool is a gem. You can [sign up for a free month trial](#) here~ you'll thank me later! 😊

## 4. Pinterest in 21

Speaking of Pinterest (my highest source of referral traffic), I've taken several big dollar courses and read oodles of articles on Pinterest. While they were all helpful, none of them quite gave me a proven, understandable and comprehensive strategy for Pinterest. So after piecing things together and figuring it out for myself, I created my own course where I lay it all out, step by step. In 21 bite sized daily videos, I give you a [comprehensive strategy for Pinterest](#), starting from the ground up. It'll knock your {pin-worthy, of course} socks off.

## 5. Studiopress

[Studio Press](#) themes and the Genesis framework: I love, love, love dressing up my site and customizing it to fit me. Studio Press makes it easy and inexpensive to DIY with their tutorials. The [Genesis](#) framework comes with all their designs and is what I use.

So a note about themes and frameworks. A framework is sort of like a mannequin and the theme would be the clothes you put on the mannequin. Genesis is the mannequin- you just purchase it once. Once you have your mannequin, you can then dress it up with any Genesis theme you like, whenever you want. You can switch these out as often as you like (or can afford, lol!)

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I currently use the Swank Theme from [Pretty Darn Cute Designs](#) and absolutely love it! This theme is currently only \$49- well worth it! But remember, you do need to purchase the Genesis framework first (the mannequin) if you haven't already.

Another theme I have an eye on is this super cute design from [Restored 316](#). When it's time to change themes, this is where I'm headed~ wink!

## 6. SEO Roadmap

**[SEO Roadmap](#)** by Daragh Walsh: So SEO confuses me and again, I spent money on courses trying to figure out how to optimize my site for SEO because that's what you're supposed to do, right? For the life of me, I still couldn't get my head around a simple strategy I could just rinse and repeat when it came to SEO... until I took this [Udemy](#) course. Daragh took something very confusing to me, broke it down step by step and helped me know exactly what to do for each post I publish on my site. Ingenious!

## 7. Send Owl

**[SendOwl](#)**: This is a service I settled on after much trial and testing (and hours of clean up and customer service nightmares after other services and plugins failed to provide what I needed) When you are ready to sell your own products or ebooks on your site (and I trust you will be soon if you aren't already!) Send Owl is going to be your new BFF. You live and you learn.

## 8. Creative Market

**[Creative Market](#)**: This is my go to place for design elements. You can purchase beautiful and unique fonts, book cover layouts and templates, backgrounds for your images, cut-outs, textures, borders, and more for your pdf's, and the list goes on. [Sign up](#) for

their weekly newsletter and you'll get their amazing weekly freebies!

## 9. PicMonkey

**[PicMonkey](#)**: This tool makes it SOO easy to create graphics and design elements for your blog and social media. I use the free version (though I'm sure it is well worth the upgrade to have access to more fonts.) Definitely one of my top 10!

## 10. Mad Mimi

**[Mad Mimi](#)**: I put this one last because even though I use (and for the most part love) Mad Mimi, it does have some very annoying shortcomings, such as no account cleanup function and the occasional missing email- da da da dum.

I've used MailChimp as well and Mad Mimi beats MailChimp on both price and usability. Who has hours and hours trying to learn an ESP? Also, Mad Mimi's customer service is incredible!

I've considered **[ConvertKit](#)** because it has some amazing features but once again, Mad Mimi beats big time on price and I discovered ConvertKit doesn't have the ability to segment lists as much as I'd like. (Particularly, if a subscriber is on two of my lists, say for blogging stuff and for my blog's rss feed, if they want off the blog list, they are permanently taken off everything including the rss with ConvertKit. With Mad Mimi, they unsubscribe to whichever list generated that particular email.) So I'm sticking with Mad Mimi until more features are added to ConvertKit or something even better comes along.



## **BONUS: FREE Blogging eCourse!**



Congrats, you made it to the end of my resource list! You deserve extra credit! **Sign up for my [FREE blogging eCourse](#) for Christian Bloggers here.** {It's better than extra credit 😊 }

I hope these resources help you as you learn to blog more effectively and streamline your blogging process. Wishing you all the best! ~AJ