

GROW IN THE GAPS

How to find your first hundred followers,
and turn them into your first real community.

Built on conversations, not on chasing reach. Three pillars, fifteen templates
written out in full, three scheduled posts a day and fifteen minutes in the
gaps.

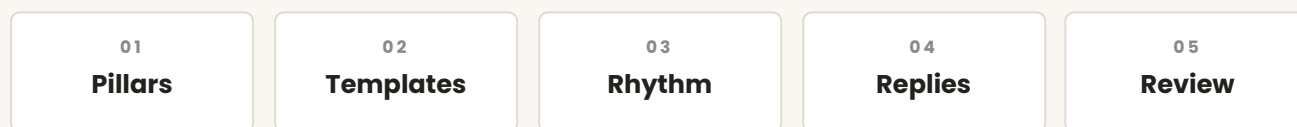
The first 100 is a different game to the next thousand.

Once you have an audience, some of it carries itself. Before a hundred, you cannot count on that. A post might travel and it might not, and you cannot build a first month on hoping it does. So you go and meet people instead.

That is the whole difference, and it is why "post consistently and add value" does nothing when you are starting at zero. There is nobody there to add value to yet.

So this kit is not really about reach. It is about conversations, and about the fact that a hundred people who know your name is a better thing to own than ten thousand who scrolled past you once.

The Calm Growth Loop



Pillars decide what you talk about.

Templates decide how you say it.

Rhythm decides when.

Replies are how people meet you. At zero followers this is most of the job.

Review decides what you do more of.

Miss a day and the loop still holds.

That is the point. A system you can drop and pick back up beats a system that only works on a good week.

Work through this once with a cuppa. About forty minutes. Fill in the blanks as you go, they are the whole exercise. After that it runs on one weekly batch and fifteen minutes a day.

Where your first hundred come from

At the start, do not rely on your posts finding people. Go and meet them yourself. These are the five places that have worked for me, and four of them happen in someone else's comments.

01 THE EARLY REPLY ON A BIG POST

A big account posts. You reply within the first few minutes with something worth reading. Their audience is sitting in that thread, and for a moment you are standing in the room.

Do this three times a day. It is the highest leverage thing you control at zero.

02 THE PERSON YOU ANSWERED PROPERLY

Someone asks a question you happen to know the answer to. You give them the real answer, for free, with no hook and no "DM me". People follow the person who helped them once.

Search your topic weekly. Answer three questions properly.

03 THE PEOPLE STARTING WHERE YOU ARE

Accounts your size, in your corner, on the same week of the same journey. These are not competitors. They are the ones who will still be replying to you in a year.

Find five. Reply to all five, every day, for a fortnight.

04 THE ONE POST THAT NAMES A SITUATION

Not your best writing. The post that describes someone's exact Tuesday so precisely they feel seen. That is the one that travels, and it is usually the one you nearly did not post.

Be specific about the situation, not clever about the words.

05 THE PERSON WHO REPLIED AND GOT AN ANSWER

Someone takes a chance on your post with a comment. You reply properly, like a person, when you can. Almost nobody does this consistently.

Answer every reply. Every one. This is not optional at zero.

Four of these five happen in someone else's comments.

Your posts can reach further than your followers, and sometimes they will. Treat that as a bonus rather than a plan. If you only take one thing from this kit, take that. Then turn to page 16.

Don't just get your first 100. Know them.

Getting a hundred followers and building a community of a hundred people are not quite the same job. Everything before this page was the first job. This page is the second one.

AN AUDIENCE OF 100

A number that went up. They saw you once. They would not notice if you stopped posting tomorrow, and you would not notice them.

A COMMUNITY OF 100

A room full of people you could name. They turn up in your comments because they want to know how the thing went. So do you.

The second one is not slower. It is the same fifteen minutes spent like it matters who is on the other end. Six habits, and none of them take extra time.

- 1 Notice the names that keep coming back**
Keep a list. Ten names is plenty. Those are your regulars, and regulars are what a community is made of.
- 2 Reply like you have spoken before**
Because you have. "How did the launch go?" lands differently to "thanks for reading".
- 3 Go and visit**
Turn up on their posts sometimes instead of waiting for them to turn up on yours. Nobody should have to earn your attention twice.
- 4 Remember what they are building**
One line each, next to the name. Nobody expects you to remember. That is exactly why it lands when you do.
- 5 Introduce people when it makes sense**
The fastest way to become the middle of a small community is to connect two people standing at the edge of it.
- 6 Do not treat every conversation as a route to a sale**
People can tell. It is the quickest way to turn a community back into an audience.

The person with twelve followers deserves someone saying hello.

You will not remember which post got you to a hundred. You will remember the handful of people you met on the way.

Your three pillars

Most people follow a stranger for one reason: they can tell what they will get next time. Three topics is enough to never repeat yourself and few enough that people can tell.

Pillar 1 • What you know

The thing you have done that most of your audience has not.

Pillar 2 • What you are figuring out

The problem you are in the middle of right now. Not the one you solved years ago.

Pillar 3 • What you believe

The opinion you would defend in a room full of people who disagree.

THE TEST

Say each pillar out loud and add **"and here is what that means for you."**

If it does not finish that sentence, it is a hobby, not a pillar.

The people you are for

One sentence. No demographics. Just the situation they are in.

I write for people who...

Write that sentence on a sticky note. Stick it to your laptop. Every post is a message to that one person.

The fifteen templates

Five shapes, three templates each. Every one comes with the blank frame and a worked example underneath, so you can see what it looks like when it is finished.

Read the **clay** brackets as your bit. Read the example to see how long each line should be. That is usually shorter than you think.

SHAPE 01

The Gap Story

Your experience
first, the lesson
second.

SHAPE 02

The Hard Truth

The thing nobody
in your corner
says out loud.

SHAPE 03

The Receipt

Your real numbers,
however small
they are.

SHAPE 04

The Short List

Numbered, one
line each, no
padding.

SHAPE 05

The Open Door

Low friction, easy
to answer, meets
people.

The five rules behind all fifteen

- **The first line does all the work.** If it does not stop a thumb, nothing else in the post matters.
- **One idea per post.** The second idea is tomorrow's post. You are not short of ideas, you are short of slots.
- **Short sentences. One line paragraphs.** White space is a design choice, not a waste of space.
- **Specific beats clever.** "40 followers and two hours a week" beats "humble beginnings" every time.
- **End with a full stop or a door.** A conclusion or a question. Never a shrug.

SHAPE 01 The Gap Story

Personal experience first. Lesson second. Never the other way round.

WHY IT WORKS AT ZERO

People do not follow information. They follow someone whose situation they recognise. This shape is the fastest way to be recognised.

1.1 • THE TURN

THE FRAME

[Time period] ago I [starting point that sounds unimpressive].

[One line about the constraint you were under.]

Here is what changed it:

[The one thing.]

[What it looks like now.]

[Punchy conclusion.]

FILLED IN

Six months ago I had 40 followers and two hours a week.

I was writing after bedtime, on my phone, in the dark.

Here is what changed it:

I stopped writing posts on the fly and started replying to ten people instead.

Same two hours. Different job.

You cannot grow a room you never walk into.

1.2 • THE CORRECTION

THE FRAME

I used to think [common belief you held].

Then [small, specific moment].

Turns out [the correction].

[One line of proof from your own life.]

[Punchy conclusion.]

FILLED IN

I used to think I needed a better camera.

Then a photo I took on my phone in a car park did better than anything I had shot properly.

Turns out nobody was looking at the picture. They were reading the caption.

I have not touched the camera since March.

The kit is almost never the problem.

1.3 • THE ORDINARY HOUR

THE FRAME

[Ordinary domestic detail. Kettle. School run. Bar shift.]

That is when I [did the work].

Not [the ideal conditions everyone else describes].

[What you built anyway.]

It still counts.

FILLED IN

6:40am. Kettle on. Everyone else still asleep.

That is when I write.

Not at a desk, not for three focused hours, not with the right playlist.

Eleven minutes and a cold cup of tea.

It still counts.

SHAPE 02 The Hard Truth

State it. Do not soften it. Do not apologise for it.

WHY IT WORKS AT ZERO

A stranger scrolling past has no reason to stop for agreement. They stop for something they have not been told before.

2.1 • NOBODY TELLS YOU

THE FRAME

Nobody tells you this about [topic]:

[The uncomfortable thing.]

[Why everyone avoids saying it.]

[What to do instead.]

FILLED IN

Nobody tells you this about starting an account:

The first month is not really about posting.

It sounds bad for business to admit that, so most people skip it.

Go and be useful in other people's comments. Your own feed can wait.

2.2 · FINE, BUT USELESS

THE FRAME

[Popular advice] is fine.

It is also useless if [the real constraint your people have].

[The version that works under that constraint.]

[Punchy conclusion.]

FILLED IN

"Show up every day" is fine.

It is also useless if you get twenty minutes between a shift and the school run.

Write the week in one sitting. Schedule it. Spend the twenty minutes replying.

Turning up does not mean typing live.

2.3 · DO LESS, BETTER

THE FRAME

The internet will tell you to [do more of something].

I am more interested in [the smaller, better thing].

[One line on why.]

FILLED IN

The internet will tell you to be everywhere.

I am more interested in being somewhere properly.

One platform, one slot, one person you are writing for.

SHAPE 03 The Receipt

Numbers beat adjectives. Always specific. Always yours. Small numbers are fine.

WHY IT WORKS AT ZERO

At the start your numbers feel too small to share. They are not. Forty is more believable than four thousand, and more useful to the person on thirty.

3.1 • THEN AND NOW

THE FRAME

[Number] in [month]. [Bigger number] now.

No [thing people assume you had]. No [other thing]. No [third thing].

Just [the boring habit].

[Punchy conclusion.]

FILLED IN

40 followers in March. 380 now.

No ads. No viral post. No spare evenings.

Just ten replies a day, most days, on my phone.

Boring works. That is the annoying part.

3.2 • WHAT I TRACKED

THE FRAME

I tracked [thing] for [time period].

Here is what [number] taught me:

[Finding one.]

[Finding two.]

[Finding three.]

[The one that surprised you.]

FILLED IN

I tracked every reply I sent for 30 days.

Here is what 300 replies taught me:

Early replies got read. Late ones did not.

Specific replies got answered. Polite ones did not.

Replies to smaller accounts turned into actual friends.

The nine minutes I nearly cut was the nine minutes doing all the work.

3.3 · THE BREAKDOWN

THE FRAME

[Result] took me [amount of time].

Breakdown:

[Time spent on the thing that worked.]

[Time spent on the thing that did not.]

Guess which one I nearly gave up on.

FILLED IN

380 followers took me five months.

Breakdown:

About 40 hours replying to people.

About 6 hours writing posts.

Guess which one I nearly gave up on.

SHAPE 04 The Short List

Numbered. One line each. No padding.

WHY IT WORKS AT ZERO

Lists get saved, and saves are how a post keeps working after the first hour. Keep every line under about eight words.

4.1 · WHAT I WOULD TELL YOU

THE FRAME

[Number] things I would tell [past you, or a beginner]:

1. [One line.]

2. [One line.]

3. [One line.]

4. [One line.]

5. [One line.]

[Which one you wish you had learned first.]

FILLED IN

5 things I would tell myself at 40 followers:

1. Reply before you post.

2. Pick three topics and stay there.

3. Specific beats clever, every time.

4. Answer every comment the same day.

5. Nobody is watching yet, so start badly.

Number one would have saved me two months.

4.2 · I DO NOT CARE IF

THE FRAME

I DO NOT CARE IF:

[Thing people worry about.]

[Thing people worry about.]

[Thing people worry about.]

I care if [the one thing that matters].

FILLED IN

I DO NOT CARE IF:

Your feed is not a colour scheme.

Your bio has been rewritten nine times.

You have not found your niche yet.

I care if you turned up this week.

4.3 · THAT IS THE SYSTEM

THE FRAME

[Task everyone finds hard], in [number] steps:

1. [Step.]

2. [Step.]

3. [Step.]

That is it. That is the system.

FILLED IN

Finding your first followers, in 3 steps:

1. List five accounts your size and three much bigger.

2. Reply to all eight before you post anything.

3. Answer every reply you get the same day.

That is it. That is the system.

SHAPE 05 The Open Door

Low friction. Easy to answer. At zero followers this is how you meet people.

WHY IT WORKS AT ZERO

Every reply you get is a conversation you can answer, and every answered conversation is a follower you did not have. Make it easy to step through.

5.1 · WHO ELSE

THE FRAME

[Observation about your people's situation.]

[One line that says you are one of them.]

Who else is [doing the thing]? 🙌

FILLED IN

Most people building something online right now are doing it in twenty minute gaps.

Nap times, lunch breaks, the hour after everyone goes to bed. Mine is 6:40am with the kettle on.

Who else is building in the gaps? 🙌

5.2 · TELL ME AND I WILL

THE FRAME

Tell me the [thing] you are working on in [time frame].

I will [specific small thing you will do for them].

Go. 🙌

FILLED IN

Tell me the one thing you are trying to grow this month.

I will send you the template from my kit that fits it.

Go. 🙌

5.3 · PICK ONE

THE FRAME

[Two options.] Pick one.

I will start: [your answer].

FILLED IN

Post daily, or reply daily. Pick one.

I will start: replying. It got me my first hundred. Posting did not.

Three posts, fifteen minutes

You are not short of discipline. You are short of a slot. So the posting happens once a week, in a batch, and your daily slot goes on the part you can actually control: other people.

Three posts a day, all scheduled

MORNING

Good morning

Two words and a wave. "Good morning 🙌" is plenty. The short one is the one people answer.

MIDDLE OF THE DAY

One proper post

Written from a template, following the rotation overleaf. This is where the fifteen templates go.

EVENING

Good night

Close the day. How it went, or just good night. Short again.

A rhythm, not a rule. Three is what I suggest to start with, because two of them take seconds to write and all three are done before your week begins.

My slot is

Same time every day. Put it in your phone as a repeating alarm before you turn this page.

1 – 9 min

REPLY

Nine minutes in other people's comments, using the 3:3:3 split. This is the part most likely to bring you your first hundred, and the part almost everyone treats as optional. Full method on page 16.

10 – 13 min

ANSWER

Go back to your own three posts and answer everyone who replied. Your posts went out without you. This is where you turn up in person.

14 – 15 min

CAPTURE

One note of anything that happened today worth writing about. A line someone said. A thing that annoyed you. That note goes into next week's batch, so you never start from a blank page again.

Fifteen minutes that exist can be filled.

Fifteen minutes that do not exist cannot. If everything else falls over this week, protect the slot rather than the output.

The weekly rhythm

Your good mornings and good nights stay the same shape every day. The one proper post rotates, so you never repeat yourself and never have to think too hard about what to write.

MON Hard Truth	TUE Gap Story	WED Short List	THU Open Door	FRI The Receipt	SAT Gap Story	SUN Open Door
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Missed a batch? Schedule tomorrow's three tonight and pick the rotation up where you left it. The rotation is a rail, not a rule.

The weekly batch

Once a week, same day, about forty minutes. Open your capture notes. Write seven good mornings, seven proper posts down the rotation and seven good nights. Schedule all twenty-one. Then you never have to post in the moment again. You only have to turn up in the gaps.

The five minute fallback

Some days you get five minutes, not fifteen. Here is what you do instead.

Reply to five people. That is the day.

Your posts are already scheduled, so the lights stay on. A quiet day of good replies still counts. The account does not go backwards because you had a short day. It goes backwards when you disappear for three weeks feeling guilty about it.

Quiet and consistent counts too.

One more thing about the rotation

If one shape keeps outperforming the others, give it two days and drop the weakest. The rotation is there to remove the decision, not to be fair to all five shapes.

The reply engine

A post might reach past your followers. You cannot decide whether it does. You can decide, every single day, to go and be useful in someone else's comments, and that is the part that builds something you would call a community.

Nine minutes. Ten replies. In my experience it is the difference between the accounts that sit at forty followers for six months and the ones that do not.

The 3 · 3 · 3 split

3 bigger

ACCOUNTS MUCH BIGGER THAN YOU

Go early. Be first or nearly first. Add something they did not say. Their audience is the room you are trying to walk into.

3 equal

ACCOUNTS ABOUT YOUR SIZE

These are your people. This is where the friendships start, and friendships are what carry an account through a slow month.

3 smaller

ACCOUNTS SMALLER THAN YOU

Nobody replies to them. You will be remembered for it longer than you would believe.

+1

SOMEONE WHO REPLIED TO YOU

Every single one. Always. Same day if you can, the next morning if you posted late. Someone gave you their attention when they owed you nothing. Answer like a person who noticed.

If you only keep one habit from this whole kit, keep that last one. The reply you send to someone with twelve followers is worth more than the one you send to someone with twelve thousand, and it costs you the same nine seconds.

Reply when you can. The point is that nobody is left unanswered, not that you answer within the hour. Nobody is sitting there timing you, and an answer written properly in the morning beats one typed at midnight with one eye open.

A GOOD REPLY

- Names a specific detail from their post
- Adds one idea, one honest disagreement, or one real question
- Two lines. Plenty.
- No link. No pitch. Not once.

A BAD REPLY

- "Great post!"
- A summary of what they just wrote
- Anything you could have sent to fifty people
- Your own post wearing a disguise
- A conversation you are steering towards a sale

When nobody replies

This happens to everyone at the start and almost everyone quits during it. Here is what is usually going wrong, in the order it is usually going wrong.

"I post every day and get nothing."

Count your replies. If you posted twenty-one times this week and replied to fewer than fifty people, posting is probably not the thing to fix first. You are talking in an empty room and wondering why it echoes.

"I reply loads and still nothing."

Look at your last ten replies. How many could have been sent to any post by anyone? If it is more than two, you are being polite, not memorable. Name a detail. Disagree once in a while.

"People read it but do not follow."

They cannot tell what they would get next time. Read your last nine proper posts. If they sit in three clear pillars, good. If they are nine different subjects, that is the problem, not your writing.

"My good posts get nothing and my throwaway ones do well."

Your throwaway posts are specific and your good posts are polished. Specific wins. Write more like the throwaway ones and stop editing the life out of the rest.

"I feel like I am shouting into the void."

You are, for the first few weeks. That is the job at the start, not a sign you are doing it wrong. For me it started lifting somewhere around thirty real conversations.

THE ONE DIAGNOSTIC

More often than not the answer is the same: **reply to more people, more specifically, earlier in the day.** Try that for two weeks before you change anything else.

The nought to hundred map

It does not arrive evenly. Knowing the shape of it is most of what stops you quitting.

0–10

THE VOID

Feels like nothing is happening. Nothing visible is. Reply anyway. Two to three weeks.

10–25

FIRST FACES

The same names start showing up. Learn them. These are the ones who stay.

25–50

FIRST POST

One post does better than the rest. Note its shape. Do that shape again.

50–100

THE TURN

Replies start arriving without you chasing. The loop starts feeding itself.

The one number tracker

Do not track everything. You will stop within a fortnight. Four columns, once a week, same day.

WEEK	FOLLOWERS	POSTS	REPLIES	BEST POST (FIRST LINE)
01				
02				
03				
04				
05				
06				
07				
08				

The monthly review, ten minutes. Look at four weeks of best post first lines. What shape were they? Put more of that shape in your batch. What pillar were they? Lean in. What was your worst week and what was different about it? Usually the slot moved. Fix the slot, not your personality.

Your regulars

The other list. The names that keep coming back, and the one thing each of them is building. Add someone the second time they turn up.

This is the page that turns a follower count into a community. It is also the one people skip, because nothing on it can be screenshotted.

NAME	WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING

HOW TO USE IT

Once a week, read the list before you open the app. Then go and visit two of them without waiting to be visited first.

Ask about the thing in the second column. That is the whole trick, and there is no trick underneath it.

Your first seven days

Everything above, in the order you should do it. Tick them off.

- **Day 1** Write your three pillars and your one sentence about who you are for
- **Day 2** Pick your fifteen minute slot. Set it as a repeating alarm on your phone
- **Day 3** Find and save five accounts your size and three much bigger. That is your reply list
- **Day 4** Schedule tomorrow's three posts, with a Gap Story in the middle. Reply to ten people using the 3:3:3 split
- **Day 5** Schedule tomorrow's three, with a Hard Truth in the middle. Reply to ten people
- **Day 6** Schedule tomorrow's three, with an Open Door in the middle. Answer every reply you get, in your own time
- **Day 7** Fill in row one of your tracker. Then write and schedule next week in one batch

Seven days in you will have nine posts out, next week already scheduled, thirty replies, a reply list and one row of data.

That is more of a system than most people build in a year.

Then what?

Week two is one batch, fifteen minutes a day and one row of the tracker. So is week twelve.

That is not a disappointment. That is the whole promise. You are not trying to go viral. You are trying to still be here in June.

Real life is not the interruption to your business. It is the business.

Start in the gap you have got today.

Ready for the full thirty days?

Started From The Gaps

Thirty days from a room full of strangers to your first regulars. £7.
Find it through the link in the @calmcreatorclub bio.

The daily version of this system

@calmcreatorclub

One short, calm read every Sunday morning
calmcreator.club

Built in the gaps. 🙌