

# Substack Workshop



CONVERSATION

So much you can do on Substack –  
this is an introduction

- Set up your Substack account
- Go over the basics – what you can do on Substack
- Discuss Settings
- Discuss Notes

Tips will be mentioned throughout  
workshop



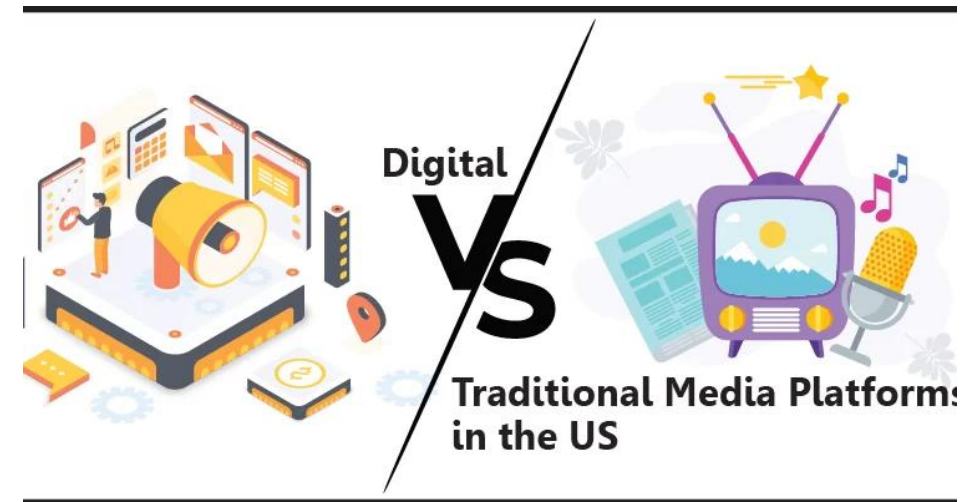
# The Shift from Traditional to Independent Media

Audiences are moving away from legacy media (TV, newspapers) toward digital, personalized content.

Trust in traditional outlets is declining due to perceived bias and corporate influence.

Younger generations prefer podcasts, newsletters, and social media creators.

Traditional media is losing ad revenue and influence.



# Why Independent Media is Rising

Platforms like Substack and YouTube let creators speak directly to audiences.

Independent voices offer diverse perspectives often missing in mainstream media.

Direct support models (subscriptions, Patreon) are replacing ads.

Independent creators build loyal, niche audiences—and often earn more.



Setting up your Substack.

Choose your name for the domain URL  
– can only change this once

Name your blog as you see fit – can  
change it multiple times

Should reflect what you write/talk  
about

<https://substack.com/app/app-store>



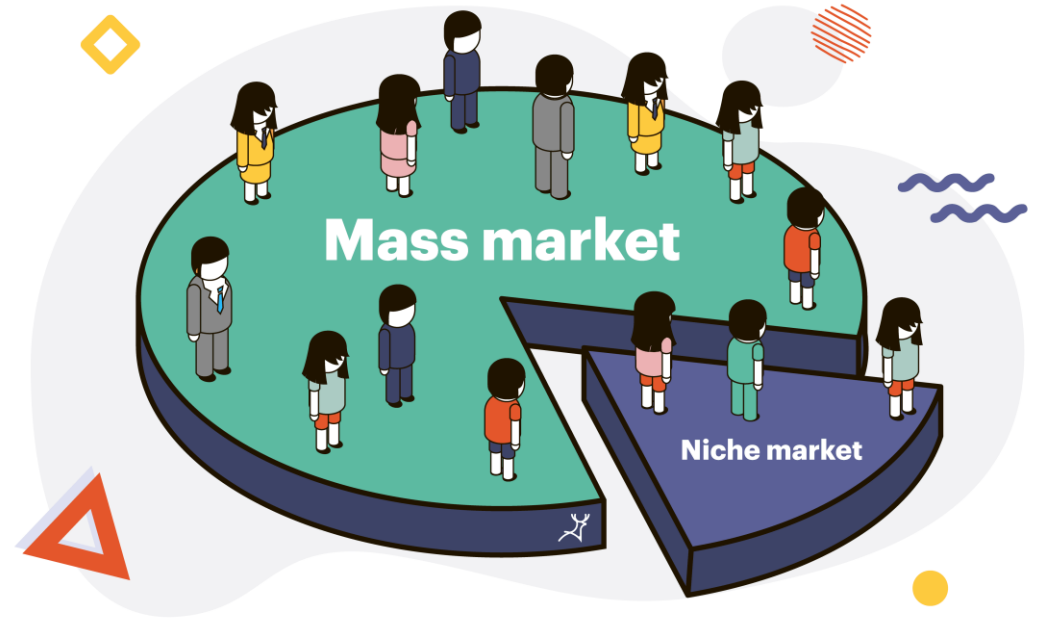
# Naming Your Substack

You need a niche, but it is not the same as you may have learned elsewhere

It's easy to get subscribers if you're famous

What do people want to read about that you can write about

What categories do you choose so people can find you



# Examples

The Naturalized Human: <https://suesenger.substack.com/>

The Department of Salad: Official Bulletin: <https://emilyrnnun.substack.com/>

Burnt Toast by Virginia Sole Smith: <https://virginiasolesmith.substack.com/>

Wellness Discovery: <https://heatherhausenblas.substack.com>

# Options

Text posts

Video posts – can include written

Audio posts – can add written or record audio by reading what you wrote

Podcast

Clips can be created in Substack

Notes posts



# Posts

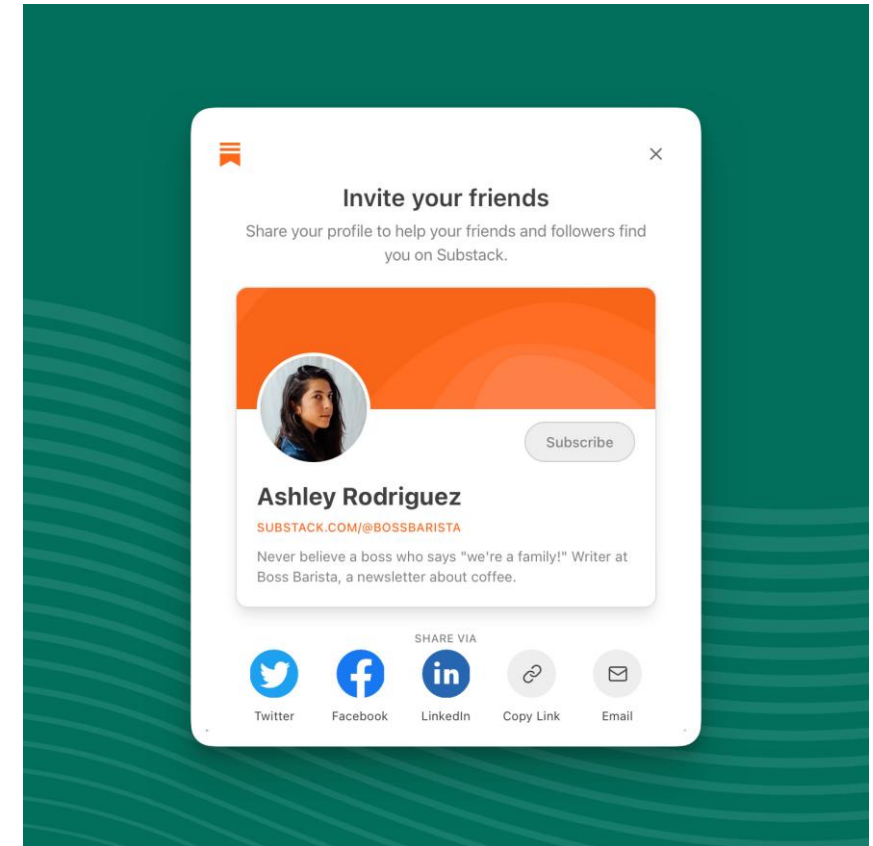
Are emailed to subscribers

You can upload your email list

But does not mean you are being seen on the app

You can start chats on Substack, but only the subscribers you have from the app will see it

You need to be getting a lot of comments (50) before you start using the chat



Put a call to action for subscribing in your post, preferably at the bottom

Don't put it in the middle of the post

- Can ask for a comment instead or
- Ask them to become a subscriber

If already a free subscriber, the button will automatically take them to paid options



## Subscribers:

Free – received emails with your posts

Paid – received emails with your posts and any content you put behind a paywall

- You have their email addresses

Followers – See your posts on Notes and may find your content, but do not get emails

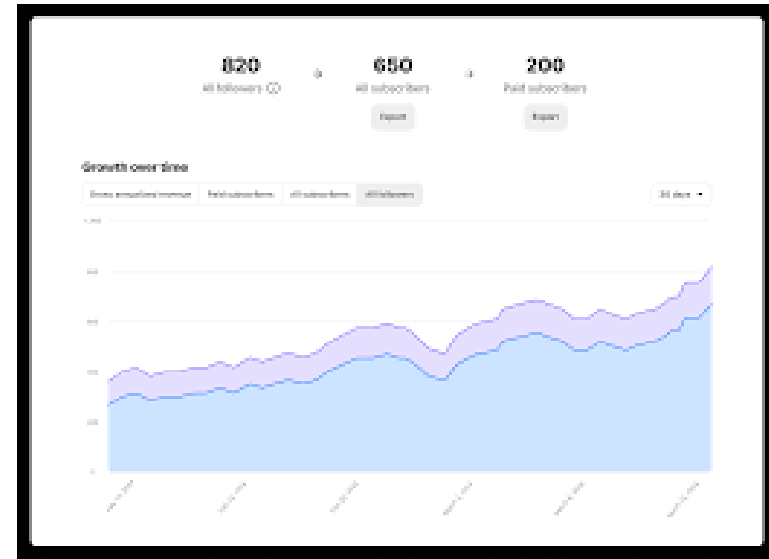


Followers – feel free to follow as many people as you like.

If someone follows you, follow back.

Be more choosy when it comes to being a free or paid subscriber. Do so only if you plan to read the posts

And they will be sent to your inbox



# Notes

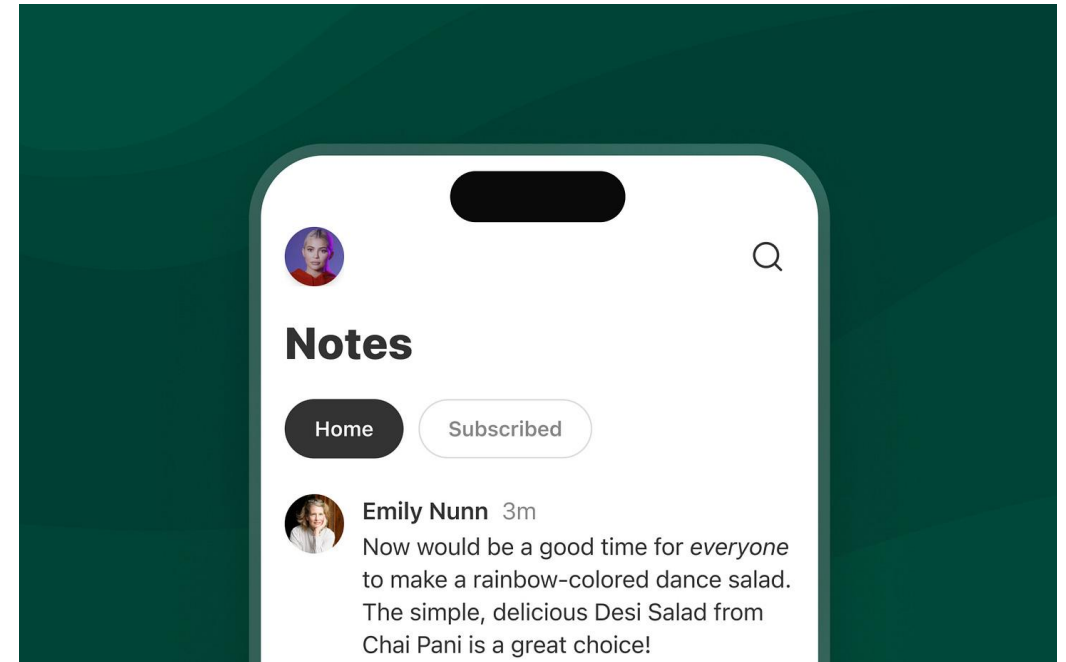
It's Substack's version of social media

It's where you post short content to attract people to know you and read your blog

It's where you find people you like

It's where you can communicate with others

Not just for posting a link to your blog



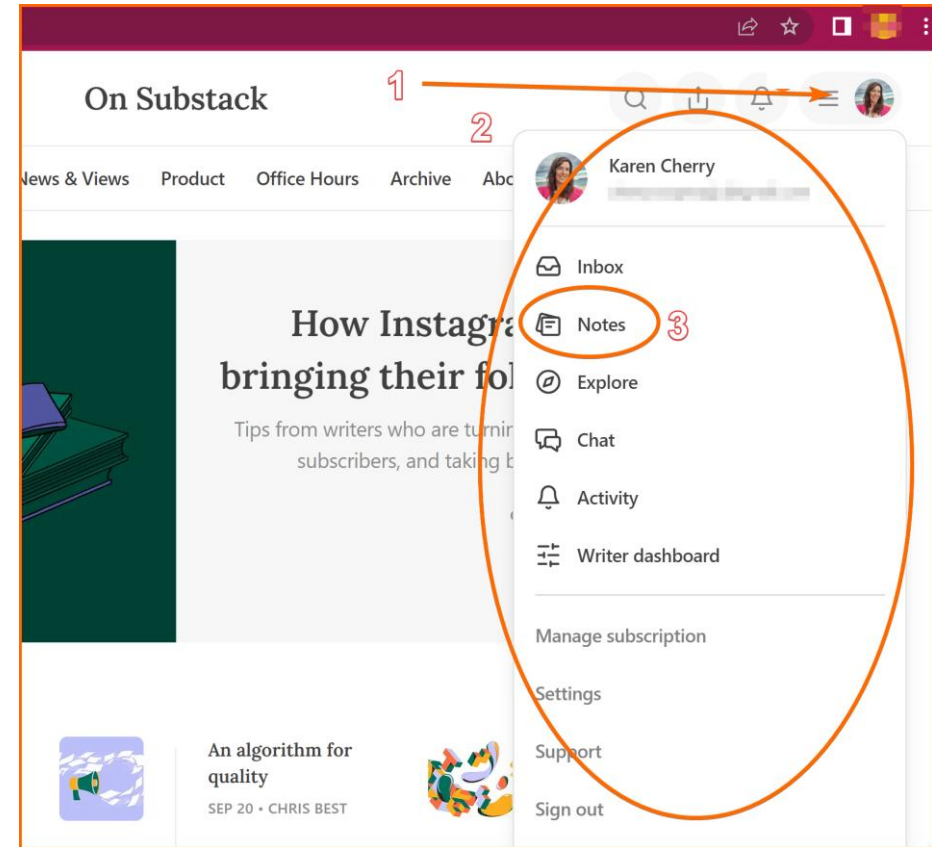
Followers and subscribers from the app see your notes

Not the people you uploaded from your email list.

To grow your list, you need to post on notes

By following and subscribing to others, they will check you out

If they like your notes – they will check you out



# Customizing Your Substack In Settings

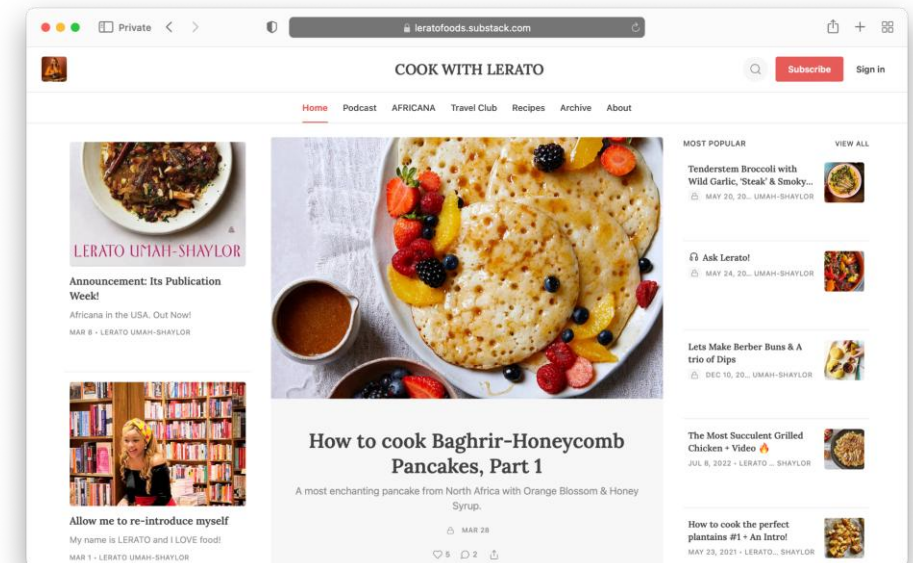
# About Page

Explain in detail *the benefits of reading your publication.*

How they'll be transformed or benefit from your Substack.

It should include:

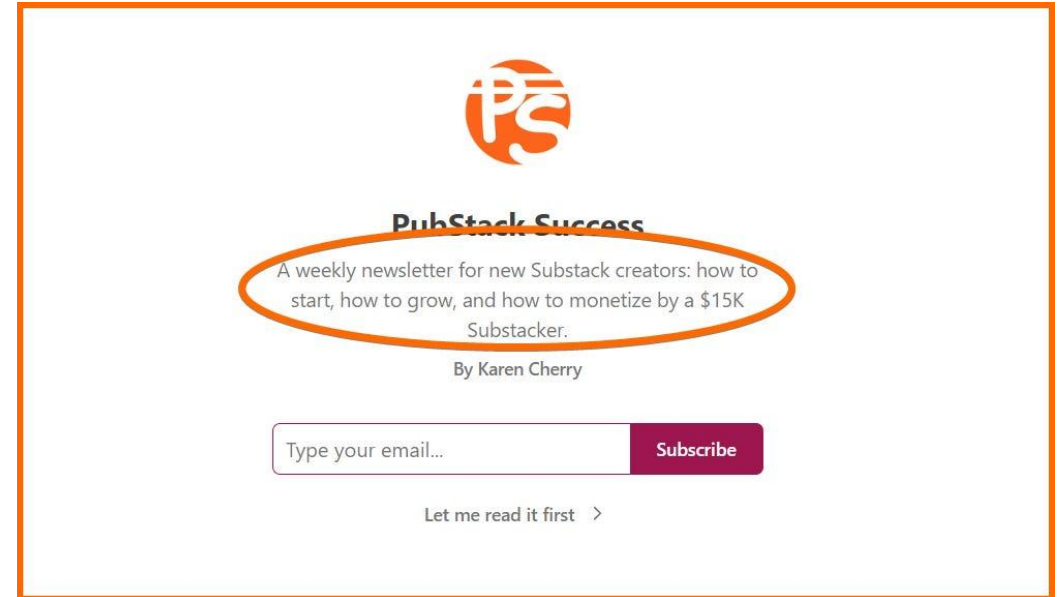
- A photo and a welcome.
- The benefits of reading your Substack, what subscribers will take away, and how they'll be transformed by it (not what you do)



Exactly what free and paid subscribers get (e.g., posts, workshops, voice memos, etc.) and why those matter

- Paid subscribers get... (both what they get, e.g., posts, and what they'll get from it
- Free subscribers get...

A bit about you as it relates to your Substack [Example](#)



# Other Tips

Tags are not hashtags

Uploading your email list

What are Substack leaderboards? – to find the leaders in each category

Paid Strategy – Unlikely to get paid from subscriptions alone

Most income will come from other things like workshops, programs, and very specific eBooks

The more you talk to specific people who may want more, the “more” can be behind the paywall

# Posts

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Put a call to action in your post, preferably at the bottom

Don't put it in the middle of the post

Can ask for a comment if not asking them to be a paid subscriber

Tell them why they should upgrade to paid – tell them something they will get.

A post can be 500 – 1500 words

It can also be a repost of someone else's post



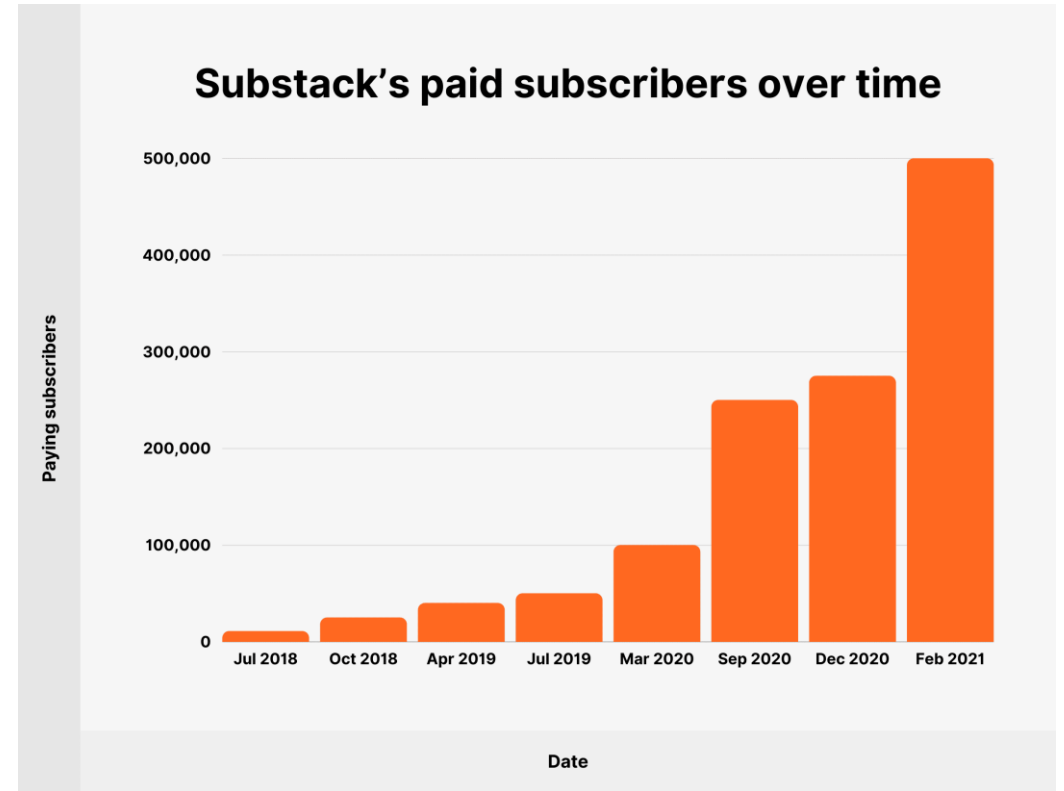
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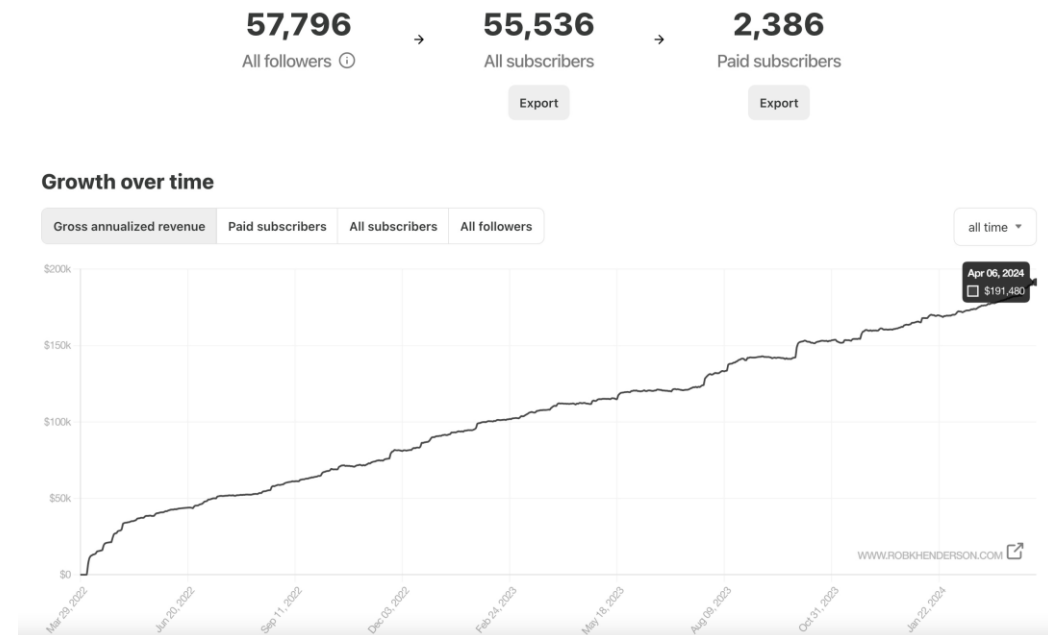


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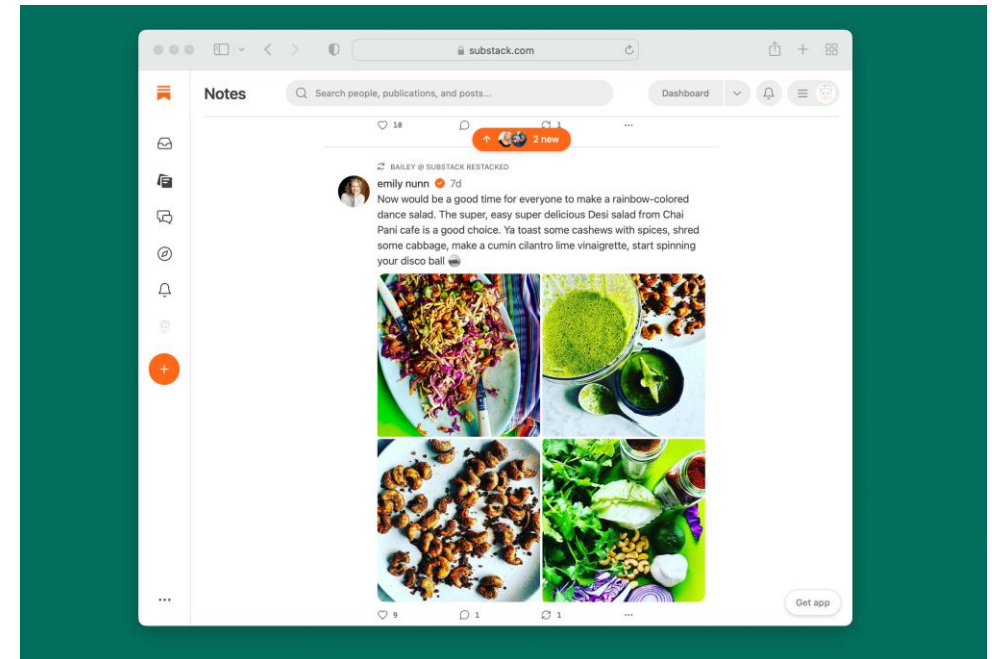
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Read other people's notes – like, comment, and restack – engage



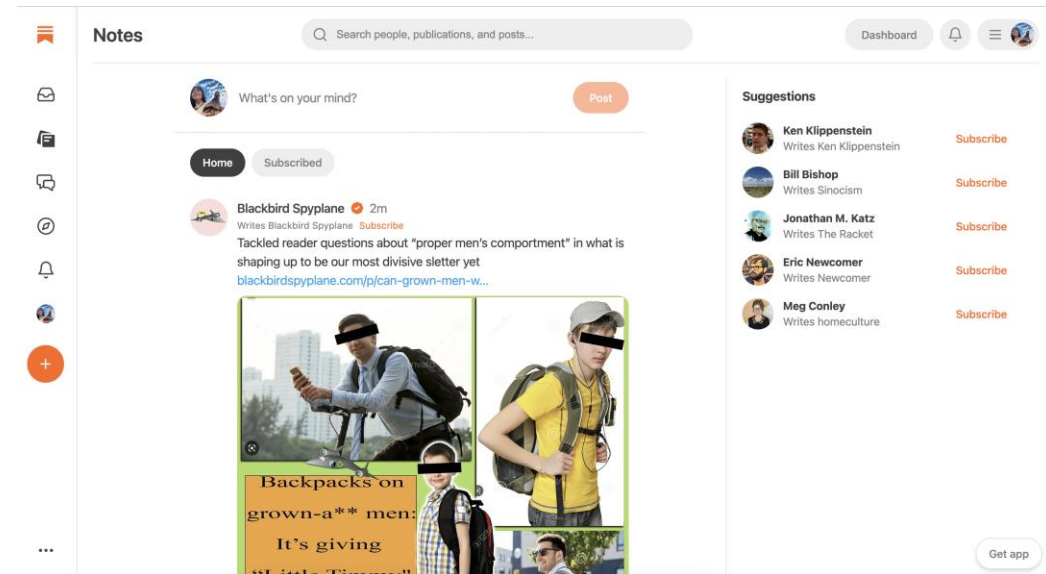
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# What's popular on Notes

Nature photos

Photos in general – that you take

Quotes

Original thoughts

Videos are not that popular – yet

Long posts are less likely to be read or go viral

[Learn more about Notes](#)

“Sometimes all you need is to chill in a cool cactus with a buddy”.



# Referrals and Directories

Directories are listings on Substack for Substackers interested in collaboration – list similar Substacks

[CollabStack Directory](#) [PARENTstack Directory](#)

Referrals:

[Can set up a rewards tier for subscriber referrals](#)

Can refer to other Substacks and be referred by them – reach out



# For More Help

Sarah Fay: Substack Writers At Work

[Substack Writers at Work with Sarah Fay | Substack](#)

\$14 a month or \$150 for the Year.

Substack  
Writers @ Work  
with Sarah Fay

