

THE HOLLIS CHAPMAN SHOW • FREE GUIDE

How to Create Free Traffic the Right Way

A practical guide for authors and small business owners —
no ad budget required

By Hollis Chapman

As shared on The Hollis Chapman Show • hollischapmanshow.podbean.com

A note from Hollis

Thank you for downloading this little book.

I host The Hollis Chapman Show, where I interview authors and small business owners. Like most of you, I don't have an advertising budget to throw around — so everything I know about getting found, I learned the free way: by showing up, teaching what I know, and pointing people to places I own.

This guide is the system I use myself, written out the way I shared it on the show. No theory, no hype — just what works, in plain language.

Let's get you some traffic.

— Hollis

Chapter 1: What free traffic really is

Free traffic means people finding you without you paying for the click. They find you through a YouTube search, a Pinterest pin, a Google result, a podcast appearance, or a friend who passed your name along.

There are two kinds of traffic, and the difference matters:

Rented traffic lives on social media feeds. It feels free, but you don't control it. The platform decides who sees your posts, and it can change the rules any day. I learned this the hard way — Facebook reach that used to bring me steady sales dried up almost overnight.

Owned traffic is your email list, your website, and your blog. Nobody can throttle it, shadow-ban it, or charge you to reach your own people.

Here's the whole strategy in one sentence: **build on rented land, but always move people to owned land.** Every video, pin, and post you make should point somewhere you own — a page with your name on it and a way to join your email list.

Do that one thing consistently, and free traffic stops being luck. It becomes a system.

Chapter 2: The rules of the right way

Rule 1: Go deep on ONE platform before adding a second.

Shallow everywhere means invisible everywhere. Pick the platform your audience already uses, learn it properly, and post there until it works. Then — and only then — add the next one.

Rule 2: Teach, don't pitch.

Give away the "how." People buy from the teacher they trust. An author who shares writing tips every week sells more books than one who only posts "buy my book." A business owner who shows their craft earns customers, not just views.

Rule 3: Consistency beats intensity.

One video a week for a year beats thirty videos in one month followed by silence. The platforms reward the steady, and your audience learns when to expect you.

Rule 4: Every piece of content needs a job.

Before you post anything, answer three questions: Who is this for? What do they walk away with? Where do they go next? If there's no "next," you're entertaining — you're not building traffic.

Chapter 3: YouTube, done right

YouTube is not just social media — it's a **search engine**, the second biggest one in the world. People go there with questions. Your job is to be the answer.

Title your videos the way people search. "How to market a self-published book" will be found for years. "Episode 47" will be found by nobody. Say the search words out loud in the first minute, too — YouTube listens.

The first 15 seconds decide everything. State the payoff up front: "By the end of this video, you'll know..." Then deliver exactly that. Viewers who stay past the opening stay to the end, and watch time is what YouTube promotes.

Thumbnails are billboards, not book covers. Three words maximum, bold contrast, a face if you can manage it. It has to read at the size of a postage stamp.

Shorts are your discovery engine. Cut one 30–60 second clip from every long video — the single best moment, captioned, pointing to the full video. Shorts find new people; long videos turn them into subscribers.

End every video with a next step. Use end screens and a pinned comment to send viewers to your next video AND to your email list. A view is nice. A subscriber is better. An email address is yours forever.

Know the money bar. To earn ad revenue in the YouTube Partner Program, a channel needs 1,000 subscribers plus 4,000 watch hours in 12 months (or 10 million Shorts views in 90 days). There's also an early tier — 500 subscribers and 3,000 hours — that unlocks fan funding like Super Thanks and channel memberships. One warning: YouTube has announced the bar doubles for new applicants on **February 1, 2027** (8,000 hours or 20 million Shorts views), so there's real value in qualifying under the current numbers. And remember, watch hours run on a rolling 12-month window — old hours expire, which is one more reason consistency wins.

Chapter 4: Pinterest — the quiet search engine

Most people think Pinterest is social media. It isn't. It's a search engine with pictures — and pins live for **months**, not hours. A pin you post today can still be sending you traffic a year from now. No feed post does that.

Three habits make Pinterest work:

1. **Every pin links somewhere you own** — your blog, your book page, your website. Traffic that lands on your own ground is traffic you keep.
2. **Pin what people search for.** Authors: quote graphics, cover reveals, "books like X" boards. Small businesses: before-and-after photos, quick how-tos, your work in real settings.
3. **You don't have to show your face.** Product-first pins work beautifully. One of my clients, a lamp-shade maker, markets her whole business with photos of her shades glowing in dark rooms — no camera shyness required.

Ten pins a week, made once and scheduled, will quietly outwork a month of frantic posting elsewhere.

Chapter 5: One recording, five pieces of traffic

Here's the system that makes all of this possible on a part-time schedule. Record **ONCE**, then split it five ways:

1. **The full recording** becomes a YouTube video.
2. **The best 60 seconds** becomes a Short.
3. **The show notes** become a blog post — Google finds it forever.
4. **Three to five quote or tip graphics** become Pinterest pins.
5. **One announcement plus one useful tip** becomes your social media posts.

One effort, five surfaces. This is how a person with a day job out-publishes people with a whole team. You're not working five times harder — you're letting one piece of work do five jobs.

This is exactly how I run The Hollis Chapman Show: one interview, then the video, the clips, the blog, and the posts all come out of the same recording.

Chapter 6: The wrong way — what to avoid

Buying views or followers. YouTube counts only valid watch time. Fake views get stripped, channels get flagged, and monetization can be taken away. There are no shortcuts that survive.

Spamming links in groups. Dropping your link into every Facebook group gets you removed and remembered for the wrong reason. Teach in the group. Help people. Put the link in your profile — interested people will find it, and they'll arrive trusting you.

Platform-hopping. A month on YouTube, a month on TikTok, a month somewhere else — that's three half-built bridges. The algorithm rewards the patient. Finish one bridge.

Traffic with no capture. A thousand visitors and no email list means a thousand people you'll never see again. Always offer the next step: a free chapter, a checklist, a short guide like this one, a newsletter. The giveaway is the bridge between a stranger's visit and a reader you can reach again.

Chapter 7: Your one-week action plan

Don't do everything. Do this:

- [] **Day 1:** Pick ONE platform. The one your readers or customers already use.
- [] **Day 2:** Write down the 10 questions your audience asks you most. That's your first 10 pieces of content.
- [] **Day 3:** Record or write ONE piece that answers the first question. Title it the way people search.
- [] **Day 4:** Set up your capture — an email list signup on your website or blog, with one small giveaway (a chapter, a checklist, a guide).
- [] **Day 5:** Split your one piece into the five surfaces from Chapter 5.
- [] **Day 6:** Post it everywhere it now exists. Answer every comment.
- [] **Day 7:** Rest. Next week, answer question number two.

Pick one platform. Post one useful thing. Put one link back to something you own. Do that every week, and a year from now you'll wonder why you ever thought traffic was about luck.

About Hollis Chapman

Hollis Chapman hosts **The Hollis Chapman Show**, interviewing authors and small business owners, streaming on Roku and Amazon Fire TV, YouTube, Spotify, and iHeart. He also runs **East Valley Marketing LLC**, helping small businesses with video creation, talking photos, video editing, websites, and more.

- Watch and listen: hollischapmanshow.podbean.com
- Books and writing: www.globalwriter.net
- Marketing services: www.eastvalleymarketing.com
- Be a guest on the show: nterview@hollischapmanshow.com

October special: 25% off the October AI software bundle with coupon **OCTOBER** — through October 31, 2026.

Thank you for reading. Now go post one useful thing.