

WORTH EVERY PENNY *joycast*TM

Hey, hey photographers. If you are frustrated that you don't have enough clients, I'm going to teach you how to talk to strangers and lead conversations that will help you book clients anywhere you go.

So the real question is, how are portrait photographers like us able to run a profitable business and still put our families first, without selling digital files for cheap and working all the time? I'm Sarah Petty, your host of the Worth Every Penny Joycast. And I went from a stressed out overworked mama with three babies to being named one of America's most profitable photographers, without working my kids' lives away. Each week, I'll show you how to find and serve boutique portrait photography clients in a world where we compete with free thanks to everyone having a digital camera in their pocket. Take the first step to adding more joy and profit to your life by downloading your free photography business tools at joyofmarketing.com/podcast.

Gosh, when photographers come into my community, so often I realize that they have a misperception of air quotes, marketing. They think marketing is some activity they do that books people, no it's not. Marketing's job is to generate leads, whether that's making the phone ring or starting a conversation with you. It's to get someone interested in what you do. Selling's job is to serve people, to find out about them, to bond with them, to ask them questions, educate them, find out if you have a solution for a problem they have, and if you do all of this right, then you book them. One of the first things we do in our Boutique Breakthrough, our foundational program, is to teach photographers the seven B's of the first phone call, because talking to people is so important. Yes, these are strategies on the phone, and they're great to be used after you start conversations with people everywhere you go. Today, I want to share some of those strategies with you, strategies that I teach my students that are proven time and time again.

All right, first, forget about business and just be interested in people first. I feel like photographers go from friendly and social in their social life and then as soon as they start a conversation with someone where they think they might want to talk about their photography

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business, they get all awkward and uncomfortable. Look, it's the same skillset that you likely have, even if you're introverted. I know, you're saying, "But I'm introverted." The word is, and, "and I'm introverted." You can be both. So you want to avoid pitching yourself right away. Seriously, people should know, like, and trust you before you pitch anything. Start by getting people to talk about themselves. Ask questions. Be genuinely interested in other people's lives, so they don't think your whole motivation is salesy and one sided, that you're only really having that conversation because you want to sell them something. You should still be interested in them and have a great conversation even if you're not selling something to them.

Second, find an affinity. You want to find something that you have in common with the other person. People like to do business with people who are like them. And let me tell you what, you can find something in common with anybody to start a conversation about, whether it's the t-shirt that they're wearing while you're in line at Target and you're waiting to check out. You notice that they're wearing a shirt from your child's school and you say, "Hey, do your kids go to that school? My kids go to that school." Instant affinity. Finding something that you have in common is such a great way to open the door to a random conversation. Remember people just like to do business with someone who is like them.

As you're asking questions of people, keep in mind that you want to ask a lot of questions about them because the law of reciprocity really states that they're going to then ask you questions back. When you give something, people feel like, "Oh, I should give the same thing and that's attention." So when you're asking them questions about what they do, maybe for a living if you get into that part of the conversation, they're naturally going to ask you what you do. And that's where you can go into what makes you different.

Another step is tell them what makes you different when they ask you what you do. It's easy to become salesy, but you don't have to, because literally you're not asking them to buy anything, you're just literally telling them what makes you different. I know that a lot of photographers struggle with this, which is why we really tackle it and coach photographers through this in our Boutique Breakthrough. We actually coach them through all of the steps of

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the first phone call, but this is a really critical one. You have to be able to explain why you're different, what you do that's different. I usually start with the sentence of, "I'm a photographer, but my business is very different than what everyone else out there does." And then I go through all the things that make me different, because if you're not different, you're not worth more. You're just a commodity. So tell them what makes you different.

And then you're going to listen to their responses, answer their questions, and this process will help you qualify if there's someone who might be interested in what you're doing. If they're asking questions about what you do that's different and they're asking about how you work and things like that, you can dig in more about their kids and their family or their pet or whatever it is you photograph. And you can schedule a time to follow up and ask, "Would you be interested? Do you want me to reach out to you? Does this sound like something you'd like to do with your family?" And if they say no, no big deal. And if they say yes, then reach out. That's how we prospect.

Literally, if I could get everyone started learning marketing the right way, that it starts with just talking to people, talking to people. You can learn so much about them and learn what's broken in your business as well. If you consider yourself shy or introverted, and you've struggled with starting conversations with strangers, this is exactly what you needed to hear today. I would print out these transcripts or look at the show notes and practice these techniques until you can do them unconsciously, look, my dad took me to Chamber activities and other business meetings and meetups when I was right out of college so I really got indoctrinated to this practice early on, but it doesn't matter how old you are because it can be learned. It is a learned skill.

Seriously, if you can master being able to start a conversation with anyone, you will soon find that even without a lot of marketing budget, you'll be able to find new clients that will help you generate income for your photography business. For almost 25 years this has served me more than any marketing tactic. Double down on learning how to talk to people. I actually created a tool called Matchstick Conversation Starters. It's like you strike a match and you light

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a fire. I created this tool to help my students learn this. And I'd like to share some of these conversation starter cards with you. So DM me in Instagram, @sarah.petty, or find me in Facebook at Sarah Petty and send me the words, conversation starters, in DM. And I will send them to you, for free. This is the best use of your time to get your business going. And it costs you nothing. So let's get going.

Okay, friend, I'm a little embarrassed to admit this, but I didn't know how to subscribe to a podcast. I know, I know. I'm new to this whole podcast world, but I figure, heck if I didn't know, maybe you didn't know either. So here's the scoop. If you want to get notified on your phone each time I drop a new podcast, do this. First, if you're on an iPhone, open up the podcast app on your iPhone, type in Worth Every Penny Joycast, and you'll see a tiny purple subscribe button, just tap it and voila. Now you'll be the first to know when there's a new episode and it'll be delivered right to your phone. So you can hit play during carpool, your drive to a session, or during your workout without having to search for it.

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