

WORTH EVERY PENNY *joycast*TM

I'm surprised my nightstand hasn't collapsed under the weight of all the books I have on it. I love to read books so much and listen to audio books too. Here are three books I read this year that I think as a photographer you might consider reading too.

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. 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.

I read once that Bill Gates reads 50 books a year, whereas the average person reads just four. I know some people who never read, so he's probably pulling that average way up, but it's not just him. Warren Buffet dedicates 80% of his workday to reading while Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Mark Cuban, they all read far more than the typical person. Are you surprised? I don't think so. They're learning and taking in more information, and sometimes I feel like I am hungry for information. There's so much I know that I don't know. Gosh, there's nothing better than a good book when you're reading it and you're getting so much information.

Last year, I think I purchased about 32 books. I know I didn't read all of them, but I'm peeling my way through them. I have a rule about books and I've talked about it here before, but my rule is that anytime someone recommends a book, I look it up. I look and decide if it's something I would like to read and I order it. I remember early on in my career I would say, "Oh, maybe I'll get to it later. Maybe I'll get to it later." And then a year later, someone else would talk about how this book changed their life, a 15, \$20 book and I didn't buy it. I know some people say, "Oh, well, it builds up on my bookshelf and makes me feel guilty" or whatever. Let that go. For me, I'd rather have a great book in the hopper ready for when I have time for it than having an open moment and not having anything great to read.

So I really made that decision quite a few years ago that, look, people buy coffee for five bucks a day. Sometimes I'm not a coffee drinker. I know some people have other habits that are expensive, whether it's smoking or whatever. I don't drink a ton. And so, I feel like, okay, if I'm going to splurge on something, I can splurge on a book, okay, maybe a lot of books, but why not? Because if there's

WORTH EVERY PENNY *joycast*TM

something in it and someone's recommended it, I want to have it. So I hope that serves you and I hope you give yourself a break when you're beating yourself up over a 15, 20, \$25 book that can add something amazing to your life. What is that worth?

Another rule I have about books, and when I'm talking about books today, I'm talking about non-fiction books, business books, self-help books, personal development books, anything that has something that can help you, I write in my books. I don't know why as kids... Well, obviously we know why, because in school you had to use the books over and over. Remember the last day of school you'd go through and erase everything, I always cracked up at that. But our own books, I want to write in them. I want to write notes to my future self. I want to write notes to the person who reads it next, whether it's someone on my team or someone I've gifted the book to or given it to the goodwill, or if I've passed it on to my kids. I want people to know what my thoughts are. I can add value to the book.

For me, these business books have served me my entire career. I pull them out and reread them at different times of my life. The E-Myth is one by Michael Gerber, which is just a favorite. I'm not talking about that one today, but I remember reading it right out of college when I was working at Coca-Cola, and then I read it again when I was working at the advertising agency and it had whole different meaning to me. Then when I started my own business, I remember reading it again and it had a whole different meaning again. And then a few years later when I was growing my business and scaling my business, I saw it in a totally different way. And then Michael Gerber, who wrote the E-Myth, wrote the foreword to our book, Worth Every Penny, which meant so much to me because that was just one of those foundational books that really helped me grow into the business person that I am, and I just love that book.

And so, I want to remember what I liked about it the first time I read it, and the second time I read it and the third time I read it and use bookmarks and post-it notes, whatever it is. Especially now being an educator, it's often that I'm grabbing books off my shelf and looking for some lesson that I remember I learned from this book 10 years ago. I do that. I refer to my books often, and I hope the three books I'm sharing with you today become those books on your bookshelf that you pull out more than once. I've bought several of these books for students in my coaching program and leaders in my program because I want them to know, "Oh my gosh, this is a book you're going to read over and over and over again."

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Okay. The first one is *The Gap and The Gain*. It's by Dan Sullivan with Dr. Benjamin Hardy contributing, and I love both of these two men and I buy every book I can find of theirs. Dan Sullivan created a program called Strategic Coach that I did for three years. I had to drive to Chicago once a quarter and it taught me how to get my business to run where I'm not working all the time, and that was amazing as I was raising three kids and running this business. It's really helped me help my students now to be able to do that same thing. Dr. Benjamin Hardy, you might know him from *Success Magazine*, I think he's the editor of that, but I know he is super involved and he is, oh, super motivational, super positive. I just love his input on different topics that have to do with business. And so, if you start watching for their names, anything they do is pretty much good.

But the premise of this book, it really is that instead of focusing on the gap, which is how far you are from your ideal, it's about looking at the gain, which is how far you have come. All right. Think about it in weight loss. If you're thinking, "Oh, I want to lose 100 pounds," and you've only lost seven pounds, you're focused on the 93 pounds you haven't lost if you're in the gap, because there's always going to be a gap instead of going, "Oh my gosh, I've changed my lifestyle. I've created better habits and I've already lost seven pounds. This is amazing. If I have lost seven pounds, I'm going to get to my goal." I think so many people live in the gap with their photography businesses because they're saying, "Oh my gosh, I'd love to make six figures or leave my day job or have a studio." And so, until they do that thing, they're beating themselves up and they're not happy with any of the wins along the way. It just can't work that way. You might never get to that goal if you're living in the gap because all you see is that gap.

If we focus on the gain and we look at, "Oh my gosh, even in the last year, I've learned these skills. I've learned this. I've learned that, and those have made me stronger," even if they're losses and lessons we've learned, failures, things like that, we can learn from that. So learning this skill is what keeps us moving forward instead of sitting in a ball, crying in the corner that, "Oh my gosh, we have so far to go." No, no, no, no, no.

I want to share kind of my biggest takeaway from each of these books, and I think my biggest takeaway from this book is how to make yourself psychologically bulletproof from anything that comes your way. Think about that. You know how we get our feelings hurt or somebody says something, whether it's on social media or in person, or we have all this head trash and self-doubt because we failed before? Guys, we've all failed before. But here's what they talk about doing in this book, which I love. It's about taking everything negative that's happened to you in the past and creating life lessons for

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yourself. So whatever that negative thing is, that failure, that just bad luck, that horrible thing, whatever it was, ask yourself, "What did I learn from it, and how has it made me better?"

I know it sounds really simple, especially if you're going through something really hard, but think about it and maybe apply it to a lesson in your life that you've learned that wasn't such a big deal, maybe a bad situation that happened at some point in your life, and ask yourself, why did that make you better? How have you changed because of it? How do you handle situations like that better now? When you do this, it makes you psychologically bulletproof because you've already done it. You've already made that mistake or learned that lesson or had that bad thing happen and it can't harm you anymore, and that was so powerful to read that in the book. It goes into obviously more depth and how to deal with massive trauma versus smaller things, but the reality is it's trauma if someone teases you when you're five, right?

Your brain really can't designate between traumas. So if you were picked on or whatever, it doesn't really know. It sees that as something. It just internalizes and it holds it against you as you go through life, right? You're scared to do this because you might get picked on or whatever it is. And so, I want you to really invest in this book and read it because it really can help you get through a lot of the things that you've gotten through. Of course, we have to hold space for therapy and other things that can help you in your life, but imagine what it would feel like to be psychologically bulletproof that sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can never hurt you. So think about it, words never being able to hurt you again, that's pretty powerful. Don't you think that's worth reading a book?

I just think photographers and entrepreneurs overall, but we're hard on ourselves because we work so hard to serve our clients and make everything great for them and we worry, what if they don't like it? What if something goes wrong? What if this? What if that? We just build all of this up inside of us. So what I love about this book is it allows us to embrace our lessons. I really think of the failures and the things that have happened in our life as steps, right? The more that you've learned from them, the more you're elevated, right? They're steps up to the next thing versus being anchors, anchors that pull you down and keep you from moving forward.

So again, you can live in the gap or you can live in the gain, but just really, really, really love this book. I highly recommend it for anyone. I also think for the college graduates coming up this spring in your life, people graduating from high school, graduating from college, when people get a new job, this

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is a great gift, right? They don't need a cake or sugar or whatever. Get them a book that can actually really change their life.

Now, the second book is another one that is a great gift. It's called The Four Agreements. It's a small little book, light, easy read. I think it's an amazing, gift-worthy book. But the author is Don Miguel Ruiz. I heard about this because I read that Tom Brady, football star, reads this before each season to remind himself what those four agreements are with himself so that he can continue to be amazing. Because we know just like in anything, it's not just about the tactics of throwing the football, there's so much more that has to happen to be great at whatever it is you're doing. So I want to share The Four Agreements.

You might want to write these down, and I highly recommend you grab this book. Okay. Here they are. First is number one, be impeccable with your word. If you say you're going to meet someone for lunch, meet someone for lunch. If you say you're going to show up, show up. If you're running late, let them know. Your word is all you have. If you stop taking care of the word that you promised other people, you're going to stop being impeccable with the words that you say to yourself, right? So when you say, "I want this as a goal," you know that you don't show up for others, so of course, you're not going to show up for yourself. If you're wanting to make your photography business rock, for example, if you're showing up for everything else you say you're going to do in your life, you're going to show up for yourself and it's going to happen.

Number two, I love this one, don't take anything personally. Ooh, that's a hard one, isn't it? Because when we mess up, we do take it personally. When someone makes a snarky comment, we do take it personally, but you know what, you can make that choice. You can take it personally, or referring back to what I said about The Gap and The Gain, you can become psychologically bulletproof and keep going.

Number three, don't make assumptions. We always make up stories about things. I can say that because I'm pretty sure all of us do it. Something happens and we just assume, "Oh, we were left out because of this." Come on, social media is terrible, isn't it? So we read things that are happening, we got left out, or we didn't get chosen for this or whatever it is and we make assumptions that we don't need to make. So maybe ask yourself, "Am I making assumptions about this, or is this a fact?" Usually, it's not a fact, it's just a story you're telling yourself, which is basically an assumption.

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Number four, always do your best. Always do your best. I think that's just a good thing to live by, isn't it? I think it also makes it easier for you to say no to things if you know don't have the time and space in your life to be able to do it. I made this deal with myself when I was out of college and I was in my first career. I was having all these amazing opportunities to be on a board for the art fair and to serve on this committee or that committee. I was asked to do a lot of things. At first, I was like, "Oh, this is so cool. What a great opportunity." And then I started running out of time and I realized, okay, I need to ask myself, am I able to commit to doing my best if I say yes? If I say no, I can't do my best, then I politely decline and say, "You know what, I would love to do that, but I can't commit to something where I can't do my best."

So it really serves two purposes by always doing your best. It gives you permission to say no when you don't think you can do your best, which also gives you more space in your life for the things that you say yes to, and it gives you the space to do your best, which I know you can do. I highly recommend this book because it just keeps us focused. I think sometimes we drift off and we get out of control. We're trying to do everything and please everyone. I think that's one of those little books, just a nice, easy read that gets you regrounded back to who you are and what you want in your life, what's important and who you are, right? Being impeccable with your word, not taking anything personally, not making assumptions, and always doing your best, I think if we do those four things, we're going to be pretty amazing people.

Now, those two books are a little bit newer, and the third book I want to share with you is one that's been around for many, many years. It's another one that I read just like the E-Myth, but I read it when I was young in my career and it really was impactful for me, and it's called The Ultimate Sales Machine. If you know my story, people would ask me when I was in college, "Oh, you're in marketing, you're going to do sales," and I would be so offended. "Oh, I'm not going to sell. I'm not a salesperson. Salespeople are bad people and they're pushy and obnoxious," and have this distorted view of who salespeople were, all along not realizing how much I love to sell because that's marketing. Marketing is about finding a problem and solving it. Selling is helping people get that solution that they need, and I really love that. It was books like this that I read before I was even ready to read them and hear their message that I think created the person that I am.

This book was written by a man named Chet Holmes, who very sadly died at a young age. He got cancer and he was in his mid-50s. His daughter, who is 24 years old, basically inherited her dad's

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company. This was 12 years ago. She was a musician. She had no background in running a business. It was a multimillion dollar international sales training business. Here's this 24-year-old kid right out of college trying to figure out, "How can I save my dad's company?" And so, she did. She jumped in and she had to learn a lot. She had to figure out what things were, all the terms in business, like CRM and all those fancy words. She didn't even know what they meant. They said when she first started that her merchant account was getting shut down and she said, "What's a merchant account?" Thinking, "Oh gosh, how you take money from people, right?" You don't want that to be shut down. She had a lot of growth to do.

What's really neat is that I loved this book and I've read it over my career, again, it's one that I pull off the bookshelves every five or so years, but what was really neat is I was at a conference last summer and I was visiting with someone and he introduced me. He said, "This is Amanda Holmes." He said, "Her father is Chet Holmes." I said, "Chet Holmes of The Ultimate Sales Machine, Chet Holmes?" They giggled. It was such a meaningful meeting because I was able to tell her, "I loved this book. It impacted me so much in my career." She was at this business conference where I think everybody had that story. Most people who have successful businesses, especially the group I was with, it was pretty successful, high level entrepreneurs, and everybody knows who Chet Holmes is. Maybe we didn't meet him, but we've been impacted by him. We just started visiting and I really liked her.

She said she was re-releasing his book with some updated information in it and her take on it, and I said, "Oh my gosh, I cannot wait to read this." And so, she did that this fall and I was able to buy it for my Peak Performance coaching students as a gift because it was so impactful for me. Plus, I know how hard it is to launch a book for anybody, but just so amazing that now I'm holding this book and I know his daughter, it means that much more to me. My dad was an entrepreneur and I know how hard he worked, and I just know how bittersweet it is for her to be able to carry his legacy on into future generations. And so, I want to share a few things that I love about this book in the hopes that you too will read it.

It's a heavier read than the first two because there are a lot of strategies in there. It's a really powerful book. Chet always talked about how he had a PhD, which he called Pig Headed Discipline. He was very disciplined in what he did. Really, this book was the start of education-based marketing, educating people on what it is you do, which really resonated with me because it's a better way to sell. It's not just pushy and salesy, but especially as photographers, guys, we have to educate people on why

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digital files are not the solution, right? We have to educate them on why artwork is important and why printed artwork is so important. This is the lost generation, and they're not going to have any of these prints when they're older because all those digital files are going to disappear. They get lost. They get damaged. We forget where they are. And so, I love that and I really think that was foundational for me, building my beliefs as a marketer and as a salesperson.

And then also, I mean, just famous for a concept that in business many of us embrace, which is the concept of the Dream 100, right? The Dream 100, this is a program we created with my community, my Peak Performance coaching students, where we applied it to the photography world and how can you Dream 100 and build your business, or we use Dream 100 as a verb. The concept is finding those fewer great partners that you can partner with to build your business. It's different whether you're an international online company versus a local brick and mortar, which is what our photography businesses are. It doesn't even mean brick and mortar, but a local business that serves a local community. I love it because there are so many great ways in there to get your eyes open to, "Oh, it's not just about Facebook ads to cold traffic." No, it's figuring out who is a great partner for me and how can I build a relationship with that person.

What's cool for me, probably without even knowing it or thinking about it, is I used the Dream 100 concept when we wrote our book called Worth Every Penny to get endorsements and to get the foreword and to get all of the things that we needed when you write a book. You think, "Oh, the publisher does all that." No, no, no, no, you do everything. So I said, "Oh my gosh, I would love to have Seth Godin, my idol, my marketing guru, who's written all the marketing books, I read his blog religiously every day, I would love to have him say some words about our book." I said, "We're not going to have a foreword if we can't get someone like Michael Gerber to write our foreword."

And so, long story short, for about two years, I worked on building relationships with these two men and through a twist of fate it all happened. Michael Gerber's wife, Luz Delia, offered and said, "Would you want Michael to write the foreword for your book?" two weeks before it was going to press. When Seth Godin gave us words of praise for our book, I was in tears. I was like, "All right. Life can end." It's funny because most people don't know who those people are. It's only those of us in the business world who grew up studying, studying, studying, and learning and trying to be better and trying to serve people better. And so, I'm noticing on Chet Holmes' book, the foreword is also by Michael Gerber, author of E-Myth. He does not do that for very many books. And so, that meant so much to me.

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But it was the Dream 100 concept that I learned in Chet Holmes' book back when I was in my 20s. It stuck with me and it's helped me build my business the entire time. And so, that's a lot of what we teach. When we teach photographers here at Joy of Marketing, we're not teaching fast, quick, smarmy tactics, like discounting and things like that. We just don't do those things. We are working on solid marketing and selling strategies so that we can attract right fit clients who love us and gush on us, and invest a lot of money so that we can have a successful business and they can have beautiful artwork forever and ever.

Okay. Here's the thing, when you're in business, you think, "Oh, I'm a photographer." You're not a photographer, you're a salesperson whether you like it or not. You are enrolling people in trading the money that they have for something they value more, which is the artwork, the images that you have beautifully created. Okay. So if you're in denial of that, I want you to know that no, you are a salesperson. You've got to learn to be a salesperson and a marketer. Those words don't have to send chills down your spine and make you feel yucky and make you feel a little nauseous. That's why I spend so much time reading, because I want to find the way to do these things that serves people, that serves our clients, that makes people love us and what we do. Because as a small business owner, people will love you. They will look up to you. They will respect you as an industry leader, and it's going to be amazing for you.

Okay. So all three of these books, I hope you consider them. I hope you buy them as gifts. When you're looking for gifts for people, especially if they are in business or they're young people starting a career in business or going to college for anything business related, consider getting them business books. With your spouse or partner, your parents, your family, when you're talking with them and they're asking you what you would like for gifts, tell them books. Keep a list, okay, because there are so many great books that can change your life and how you look at things and how you feel about yourself.

I just know that reading is that one thing that most super successful people have in common. What I love about it is no matter what your education budget is or your view on investing in education, reading is such an affordable way to grow your skills, to introduce you to a new perspective and keep your mind curious. So I'm challenging you, friend, get a library card, hit up your local bookstore, get an Audible account, or just go to Amazon and get the book and start one of these books this week. Then please DM me on Instagram, Sarah.Petty, and let me know what your biggest takeaway was because maybe it was different than what mine was, and let's go make this year amazing.

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Hey, photographer, it's Sarah again with a quick question for you. Do you ever wonder why some photographers make \$300 a session and others make 3,000? I know I did. So I dug deep into what's going on, and I wrote a book for you called Worth Every Penny. You can get a free copy at joyofmarketing.com/freebook. Inside this book, you'll learn four ways to price your photography and why there's just one pricing strategy that attracts the best clients, what to do when you need clients, and why paying for ads doesn't work and what to do instead that's way cheaper, the dos and don'ts of social media, what most photographers are doing wrong that lowers their profits and what to do instead. I'm not sure there's a book on the planet that more photographers have read. 23,124 photographers have it already, so I want you to have it too. Grab your copy of the hardcover book free here, just pay a little for shipping and handling at joyofmarketing.com/freebook.