

# WORTH EVERY PENNY *joycast*<sup>™</sup>

- Sarah Petty: Is it possible to make as much from a portrait session as you can from photographing a wedding? Today, my student, Kaycee Joubert, is joining me to talk about just that. Kaycee is a 16 year wedding photographer who loves weddings, which I think is so cool. She recently had a 40 minute portrait session that generated more income than her largest wedding collection ever, which is so cool. If you're a photographer who does weddings and portraits, and you're trying to hit the six figure mark and you're burning yourself out in the process, you're going to want to listen today. Hey Kaycee, and thanks for being here.
- Kaycee Joubert: Hi, Sarah. Thanks so much for having me.
- Sarah: Yeah. So what I love about you, we're going to go a lot of places. But what I love about you is that you love weddings, which I know there are a lot of wedding photographers out there who dislike weddings and are trying badly to get out of them. But what's your view on that?
- Kaycee: I guess I'm a geek. I mean, I love love. I think even when you're photographing in the same location, every couple, every relationship brings its own flavor or spice to the venue, and I think that's kept me coming back year after year.
- Sarah: I love that. I love that. And then I love that you had the large portrait order that was bigger than a wedding, but let's start by going back to your journey as a photographer because you're not a new photographer. You've been around for a while. Share where you were and sort of walk me through the adventure of the growth of your business.
- Kaycee: I feel like I've tried everything and flailed at a lot of different things. So I guess I started my business right out of photography school and it wasn't even my first degree. I went back, it was kind of just that voice in the back of my head, I always wanted to be a photographer and I wanted to learn lighting. So I went to the Art Institute of Seattle and graduated with this awesome commercial photography degree, knew nothing about business, and jumped right in. So I think my 8 by 10 starting off was like \$25. But the power of print, I saw the value in print, but I just didn't know how to price myself profitably. So it's been a long journey.
- Sarah: And they don't teach you any business in photography school, do they?
- Kaycee: No, they don't. They don't. No. And in fact, my instructors encouraged me not to get into weddings just because they said if you ruin someone's wedding day, that would ruin your business. And I didn't listen to them. In fact, my girlfriend, one of my best friends was getting married and she asked me to photograph her wedding, and I'd never done one before. And I was super scared because of what my instructors had said. And she's like, "I don't want some stranger there.

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I want someone I know and trust there." And I was like, okay. So I grabbed two of my friends. There was three of us photographing her wedding day, which seemed like overkill at the time. But from that moment on, I was kind of hooked. It was everything I had learned in photography school: architecture, product, food photography, fashion, portraiture, all wrapped up in one day full of all the emotion, full of all the fast-paced lighting on the fly, all of the things. And I literally was hooked from that moment on.

Sarah: I love it. And so when you're being a wedding photographer, how many hours does it take of post work?

Kaycee: Oh, sweet Lord. I mean, if I'm honest, in the beginning it was probably 40 to 60 hours. I'm not even kidding. Now it's a little better, but it's still a lot of time.

Sarah: A lot of time, which is interesting. And I see portrait photographers spending that much time editing and retouching too. And it's crazy because it doesn't have to be that way if you're focused and you know how to serve your clients in a way that isn't just giving them hundreds of retouched and edited beautiful digital files. Because I personally don't think that serves them.

Kaycee: No, not at all. And I think that was the aha moment for me this last year was with the portrait session, you're only editing 25 to maybe 40 images, where in a wedding, it can be hundreds. So yeah, a lot of light bulbs have been going off for me.

Sarah: Yeah. So did you always have portraits in the mix while you were doing the weddings and you were raising a family? And so how did all of that unfold?

Kaycee: Yeah, families, and high school seniors, all the milestones of life really have always captured my heart. It's what I enjoyed doing. They've always been a part of the mix, but I don't think I was priced profitably with my prints and I sold my digitals.

Sarah: So when digital came out, you were giving digitals to people. Is that what it looked like? And what were you charging? Do you remember?

Kaycee: I think I was charging 750 for all the digitals, and I was still pushing prints. But not artwork. Not artwork. I was a big advocate for albums just because my parents eloped and the role of film got ruined, and so they never had a wedding album. And always that was so important for me. And so having an album for my wedding clients, just being able to share that story with people there, it resonated with them. But with families, it was just a little different.

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- Sarah: Yeah, I mean, 750 is ... Probably a lot of people listening might be going, "Wow, I wish I could get 750 for a session." But I would guess people weren't ordering a ton on top of that. Is that true?
- Kaycee: No. And I had online galleries and I was very passive. I didn't want to be pushy, so I was like, here's your online gallery. Order if you want to. That kind of a thing, which is kind of funny now, but ...
- Sarah: Funny why, because what did you realize?
- Kaycee: I just wasn't serving them. I was overwhelming them. They had a gallery of 50 to 60 images and they're probably thinking, what am I supposed to do with this? Couldn't see the bigger picture. So no, just being able to help guide my clients through the process and narrowing down what's truly important to them, I feel like I'm able to serve them better.
- Sarah: Yeah. For sure. For sure. So you're doing weddings and you're charging \$750 for the digital files. What was the problem back then?
- Kaycee: I was charging \$750 for my family sessions. Weddings was a different story, but the only way I could make more money is if I took on more sessions. And so over time I found myself just burning the midnight oil, just burning the candle at both ends, so to speak. Just working myself to death and not having a lot of time for the people I love the most. And that's the whole reason why we own a business.
- Sarah: Yeah. How did that show up in your personal life? Do you feel like you were showing up not as your best self? Because I remember how I was when I was doing that, working all the time. It's not very fun. It doesn't bring out our best self, I don't think.
- Kaycee: No, no, it doesn't it.
- Sarah: So what year was that when you were like, I can't do this anymore. Do you know a specific year or was it over time, you're like, I'm just losing the love for my business? Or what was that trajectory? What did that look like?
- Kaycee: Well, my personal life kind of came to a halt. My marriage dissolved eight or nine years ago and I took a deep dive in into therapy actually. And I found we go to the doctor, when we're sick. When we have a problem, we hire someone to help us. So I hired a therapist. When you have a toothache, you go to the dentist. And my business plateaued for six or seven years, and so why don't I hire a business coach? And so really that was the impetus of joining Peak Performers is because I wanted to learn from someone who was doing it, who had a profitable business ... because that was super important to me. That is the

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reason why we start, or at least that was for me. I started my own business so I could have the time. My parents owned a small business growing up and they were at every single athletic event. They were always there. And I just found, I don't know, I was really lucky in the parent department and I wanted to be able to do that with my kids too.

Sarah: Yeah, for sure. So when you found our program, were you looking for a coach or did you just happen upon something?

Kaycee: I happened upon something. Personal development's always been really big for me. And I attended your Go Boutique Live, the three day class. And I was so inspired and so just wanting a change and I actually didn't sign up right away. I actually waited a couple of days and each day that I waited, this voice in the back of my head was like, what are you doing? What are you doing? And I remember calling ... And just being like, "I don't know if I should do this program. It seems really cool. They're my people, they're my tribe." And she was like, "What is it going to cost if you don't do it?" And those words for me, it just got me right in the gut and I was like, "Ah, you're right, you're right." And the next day I contacted your team and they're like, "You're a little bit behind, but you'll jump right in."

Sarah: Yeah. So had six figures in your business been a goal? Like I'd love to make six figures. And how long had that been a goal or tell me about that, what your financial goals were from your business?

Kaycee: I think that's always been a goal for me, was to hit six figures. So 16 years in the process. Tenacity, man.

Sarah: And then you joined our program. And how long did it take you?

Kaycee: Well, my first year I was in for eight months and I came close. I came to 96 or 97,000, I don't remember.

Sarah: Which is crazy.

Kaycee: Which is crazy. So that gave me the confidence for the next year. I was like, I knew I was going to hit it, but what I didn't realize was how much time I was going to have with my family. Looking back over my year, going over my numbers, and I was like, wow, I did a lot of traveling, which was so cool and spent a lot of time with my family and was able to visit every single person in my family. We're kind of spread out, and I hadn't done that since before COVID. And so that was super cool and it meant so much to me to be able to do that.

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- Sarah: And then you blew past six figures this past year and do all those things. Like that just gives me chills all over because I think everybody thinks if I work harder, I'll make more money and look at 16 years, you worked so hard.
- Kaycee: My dad always said, "You need to work smarter, not harder." And I always thought I was, but I felt like this year I actually maybe worked smarter.
- Sarah: Yeah, for sure. And you are serving harder as well, so it's not like some tricky yucky thing. I mean, how do you feel about yourself as a business person?
- Kaycee: Oh, I love serving my clients. Just being able to design someone's wall space, and when they see their images and then they see their images on their own walls and how it comes to life, that's enough right there, that gives me goosebumps and just love being able to serve my clients that way.
- Sarah: How do you feel about yourself as a photographer, and a business owner, and someone who can go out and get a client when you want, and serve them in just such a high way?
- Kaycee: I'm struggling with this one, I'm not going to lie.
- Sarah: I don't know. I just feel like you just have bloomed like a flower and I just feel like you are, I don't know, there's just more pep in your step. And I don't know, I didn't over those 16 years about I just think you are this powerful invincible woman. Have you always felt that way? Or I don't know.
- Kaycee: No, no. The head trash is real. The head trash is real. I think it's been a 16 years of working on my mindset. I think growing up there was a lot of blocks around money and your value and what you're worth. I always felt like you had to work really hard to be able to earn a big income. And now that I've accomplished that goal, I want to be smarter with that goal. I want to see how much more of that I can bring home and be more profitable and keep my overhead down. So that's my next step.
- Sarah: We always say new level, new devil. You get to the next level. It's like, okay, I have new set of things I want to work on, which is cool, which is so cool. I also just love how you're having an impact in your community. You've gone out, you raised over \$10,000 for the Humane Society, which is fantastic. How did that come about?
- Kaycee: Well, I reached out to my local Humane Society. I had done this calendar a couple of years ago pre-COVID, and I'd done it for them for four years. And each year I was raising more and more money for them by doing a calendar. And it was a really great way because it was giving back to a charity. Plus I had 12 new

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clients. But with this new boutique lens on, I don't know, it was really cool. There were a lot of business owners in my community that I was able to serve, not only for the calendar, but photograph their families, and then also photograph ... Did their business portraits and things for their business at the same time. And so just being able to serve the community, get to know different members in my community, and then of course just being able to give back was huge.

Sarah: Yeah. And how about your workflow? Are you protecting your nights and weekends or you probably still photograph weddings on weekends?

Kaycee: Yeah, but right now, I only have five weddings booked for the year, and I think I'm okay with that number. I might take on a couple more if they're the right fit. But I think every Monday when I meet up with my small group, always one of my big wins is I took the weekend off and that feels so good. Just being able to have that time with family and go skiing or go to my kids' ski races or to sit home and do nothing. Like what? What's that?

Sarah: Yeah. And your kids are in high school now and that goes so fast. So being able to be at all of their things, I'm a little jealous you're in Colorado where you get to snow ski. Like we didn't have any cornfield sports here, but we did have volleyball, so I survived with my kids. But that is so cool. Well, gosh, I appreciate you being here so much and your story is so inspiring. I hope that everybody listening sees that they can build the life that they want. It doesn't just have to be working harder, harder, harder. You did that for 16 years, Kaycee Joubert, and now look at you. I'm just so proud of you and I'm so happy and I love having you in our family. We have such an amazing community. Do you have any final words to share on the effect of the community that we've created has really supported you and helped you get where you are?

Kaycee: Oh my gosh. I mean, if I could give one piece of advice to my fellow photographers is to find a mentor or a group of people who are doing it better than you, and you have who have what you want, surround yourself with them, share your successes, find your tribe, find your people who would lift you up and it will make all the difference.

Sarah: It really does. It really does. Well guys, I'm so glad you were here with us today. And what I love about Kaycee's story is that she's been working as a photographer since 2006, which is 17 years. Yet this year she finally found the combination of wedding and portrait work that led her to plowing past six figures, a number that had been so elusive. Kaycee had tried everything to get there: digital files, prints, working weekends. Yet the way it finally came together was by her going all in on boutique, just jumping in with two feet and photographing fewer right fit clients. We all think to have more money, we have

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to photograph more clients. And it just doesn't do it that way. It's not magic, it's math. It's getting the right fit clients and thrilling them so they order more.

I just want everyone listening to know the boutique model works so well, and I hope Kaycee has inspired you to make it work for you. And listen, we are here for you. If you are looking for that community and that mentor, that is what we do here at Joy of Marketing. And I would love it if we could help you in any way. There are lots of ways we can help from this podcast to different events that we have throughout the year. So check out the links in the show description to get started. And just remember, if you take anything away from today, it's that working harder isn't always the direct path to get where you want. Keep going, I believe in you, and I hope to meet you soon.