

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

Sarah Petty: When things weren't working out for her family of five financially. Portrait photographer, Amanda Costle, felt like a burden. She was living in a super saturated market filled with photographers and imposter syndrome was holding her back. Maybe you can relate. Today I'm talking with Amanda about her decision to push herself in a new way and the unbelievable outcome that has her husband saying she became a totally different person, in a good way.

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](http://joyofmarketing.com/podcast).

All right, well I'm super stoked to be here with Miss Amanda Costle and I want to hear your story, Amanda. I want everyone to hear your story. So welcome.

Amanda C: Thank you. Thanks for having me.

Sarah Petty: Absolutely. I'm so glad you're here. So tell me your backstory. What was your business story before you converted to boutique? Where did you start? What was your thought process?

Amanda C: Well, I worked websites for 12 years and that came to a close pretty abruptly. And I thought, okay, I'm just going to dive into this and not knowing what I was

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doing, not really having a plan. It wasn't probably the best choice at the time until maybe a year later when I found Boutique Breakthrough. I made \$300 my first year.

Sarah Petty: What was your life situation? Was this a part-time thing or just a side hobby? Or where did photography fit in your life?

Amanda C: I wanted it to be full-time. It wasn't because I didn't know how to find my clients. I didn't have the confidence to find them and then charge them basically. I gave away a lot of stuff. People would come to me and say, "Okay, well let's do this." And it's, "Oh man, that's a lot of money." "Okay, well you know what? I'll waive the fee for you and let's make this work for you." But then at the end of the year doing taxes, I'm like, man, yeah, I didn't even make enough to go through with this. And then year two came through and I'm thinking, man, I'm not even making enough. I'm going to have to find a full-time job, go back to not being there for my family again. And that was stressful for me. I didn't want to go back to that.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. How many kids do you have?

Amanda C: I have three kids.

Sarah Petty: Little? Are they little?

Amanda C: I have two seven-year-olds and a 16-year-old.

Sarah Petty: Okay. So you've got both ages. Both age groups. Yeah. It's a hard decision. Why do we have to choose making money over our family, either working all the time for someone else or doing the digital file model, working all the time. So you realized that wasn't working. How did you feel about your skills?

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Amanda C: I definitely didn't think that I was good enough or experienced enough to sell my work. But I definitely had imposter syndrome. Who do I think I am to be here? There's so many other people and where I'm at, it's such a saturated market. I mean, you go on one of the Facebook pages where someone's like, "I'm looking for a photographer." And there's like 150 people that are like, "Here's my website. Reach out to me." I mean, that's huge. 150 is what I counted one time and I thought, who am I to be able to fit in there?

Sarah Petty: Yeah. And the next person's trying to be cheaper than the one before, right? Oh, they're going to do 30 images for \$100. I'll do 40 for \$75. And then finally free.

Amanda C: Right. Exactly. And that's where I was. I was the person, "Okay, well, I'll do it for free."

Sarah Petty: Were you justifying in your mind, because I know I did this, were you like, okay? And how do you decide when you've had enough experience or you're good enough? When did you think that was going to show up in your life?

Amanda C: I had no idea really when I thought it was going to happen for me. I just kind of kept chugging along, failing over and over again because I didn't know what to do. I didn't know my worth at the time.

Sarah Petty: So then you decided, did you have a moment where you're like, I didn't need to get a job or I need to figure this out? Or what did that look like?

Amanda C: Yeah, I definitely kept having that in the back of my head. And my husband was so supportive and so sweet about it. But things weren't working well financially for our family and I felt like a burden on my family at that point. And that's really when I went to the Boutique Live and I got all of that. I started selling my images for \$25.

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Sarah Petty: Well yeah, there you go. Not exactly what we had in mind, but right.

Amanda C: Well I was like, "Oh, I can sell my stuff." So I'd sell them and someone would get a \$35 package, the ones from at school where you would go. And I did the same thing for my family packages and whatnot. And that year I made \$500 that year, which... So still, I was actually job searching when I decided to sign up for Boutique Breakthrough.

Sarah Petty: All right. So here you had the opportunity to learn a system and change everything and start making... You heard me talking about Julies, people were making \$1,000 orders and higher. What were you saying in your mind? This can't be true or this can't be for me? Or what was that conversation like? Or what if I could do that?

Amanda C: You know what it was, I definitely thought, okay, all these other people are doing it. Maybe I could do it too. But then I thought, again, going back to the imposter syndrome, who do I think I am to be able to do this? That's a huge thing that was in my head. But just worrying about failing at it. If I do sign up for this and then I fail, then I am that much further behind. I'm going to be letting my family down. I'm not going to be a good example for my kids. My kids are going to see me fail. And I most certainly didn't want that.

Sarah Petty: But then you were you like, but I don't have a choice because I either have to get a job or do this, so what did your husband say when you said you wanted to do this?

Amanda C: It's kind of funny because he was out of town and he was hunting. So I wasn't able to really talk to him. So it was just kind of like this whole conversation in my head. And when he came back, I'm like, "I did something big." He's like, "Okay."

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Yeah. And I talked to a friend and she's like, "There's just no room for failure. You cannot fail." You just have to have that mindset. There's no room for failure in this.

Sarah Petty: All right. I love it. So you jumped in, you started learning, you started doing. Because that's my thing, I don't have courses anymore that are just do at home, do it yourself and be on your own. It's all being coached and doing. What was your biggest aha as you're learning this entire system? Was it easy for you or was there a place you got stuck?

Amanda C: Well, there's always little places to get stuck. Thankfully the coaches were able to work through all that stuff with me, which was great because I freeze sometimes. I get through some and I'm just like, oh my gosh, what do I do now? How do I do this? So that was great. I kind of went through, you know how there's different stages of grief? I kind of went through different stages of Boutique Breakthrough, if that makes any sense. But I was super excited and then I'm like, oh, looking at all these other photographers. Oh, they're so good. And then I didn't really trust the process. Well no, I can't imagine how this would work. So I was like a little defiant teenager.

And it was funny because I'm like, "Well no, I really like this. I'm doing this and I really like this." And they were like, "You came to us. This is what you want and trust the process. You can do this. Just trust it." And once I trusted the process and took action, that's, man, that's just the biggest thing with Boutique Breakthrough for me was to take action. Don't just write your notes. I'm really good at lists. Make a list of all the things that I need to do that I want to do. But taking action on those was huge for me.

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Sarah Petty: And we do it in little bites. So you almost don't realize how much action you're taking, because you're taking one little step and then another little step and then another little step. So you got a client and you're getting ready to present and you're thinking what?

Amanda C: Oh gosh, am I going to be able to do this? It was an existing client and I had already scheduled her. So I told her, I said, "Look, I'm trying this new model. I will give you the options to go with my old model, which is, you just take your images and run. Or you can go with my new model that I'm working on and allow me to serve you big. I want to serve you well." And she ended up going with that. And I was just like, "What? Really? You sure?" Because nobody else made any interest in it before. But once I had all the tools, I knew how to show her that it was worth it and how to explain to her how I was going to serve her. And she went with that, which was super exciting and still a little scary, but more exciting than scary.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. Yeah. So you got through the order and you placed it and you realized it was over \$1,000 and you...

Amanda C: Yeah, I just sat there. I think my hands were kind of numb cause I'm just like, "Oh my gosh, this is actually happening." I keep kept hearing, trust the process, trust the process. And it worked. And she left and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I got my Julie. I can't believe this happened." I was just beside my myself excited. And then I got the text and she says, "Hey, do you think you could come by tomorrow to my house and just kind of go over some things?" And I started panicking, thinking she's going to cancel everything. She went home and realized that I really wasn't worth it to her. And you know what happened is I showed up and she purchased more from me. It was amazing.

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Sarah Petty: Oh my gosh. That is just my happy meter flying out of my head. That is amazing. That is amazing because you served her and you took care of her. Do you remember what that order ended up being?

Amanda C: \$3,400 after tax and everything. Yeah.

Sarah Petty: Oh my gosh.

Amanda C: Yep.

Sarah Petty: And she loved it. And she's probably displaying it in her home and it's amazing. What does your husband say now?

Amanda C: He's super excited. He's just like, you're doing this. He's my biggest supporter. And obviously from talking, you guys probably understand that confidence has been my biggest issue. And so he was just like, "Look what you did. You did this. You can do this." And that was such an incredible feeling for sure.

Sarah Petty: That is amazing. Good thing he went hunting.

Amanda C: Yeah.

Sarah Petty: And he wasn't there to put doubt at the moment when you're like, "You know what? I know this is what I need. I need to just do it." Sometimes you want... They say, do it and apologize later.

Amanda C: There you go.

Sarah Petty: I love it. Well, thank you for sharing your story. That is so inspiring. I know so many people who struggle with that whole imposter syndrome. And I know it kept me stuck for years and it's like there are other people doing this that maybe

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aren't even as good. And I wasn't that good, but I know that's not what makes you money. It's the confidence in yourself.

Amanda C: Absolutely.

Sarah Petty: Well, thank you so much for being here.

Amanda C: Thank you. And good luck everyone.

Sarah Petty: Thanks Amanda.

Probably one of the most fragile phases of going boutique is that tender spot where you're fired up about the possibilities, but you don't have a ton of income coming in yet because you haven't gotten your first \$1,000 client, the person we call your Julie. Going boutique really turns your business upside down in a good way with new systems for selling, for marketing, and for pricing. And it really can be heart pounding and nerve-wracking.

Well, one of the ways I've made the transition easier for photographers is my 60-day online workshop called Boutique Breakthrough, where we scrub through your prices, your photography, your brand, and your selling system to make you boutique. We only open this course up a few times a year to a small group of photographers because my team and I literally hold your hand through your transition. A new class is starting soon, so if you're interested in learning more, go to [boutiquebreakthrough.com](http://boutiquebreakthrough.com) for a free training to see if Boutique Breakthrough is right for you.