

WORTH EVERY PENNY *joycast*[™]

Sarah Petty: The day her husband said, "You're always on the dang computer and you're only making \$200," was the day longtime photographer Stacy Lange knew she needed a change. Today you'll hear this breast cancer survivor's story of how she went from not making enough to pay for taxes to serving her first photography client that invested over \$4,000 in portraits.

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.

I'm stoked to be here with Stacy Lange talking about her journey. Stacy, welcome.

Stacy Lange: Thank you.

Sarah Petty: I am so glad you're here. So tell us your backstory. What's your history with your photography business?

Stacy Lange: Yeah. So I did the digital model file since 2011. That's when I became a stay-at-home mom because my son was born with a rare syndrome called Prader-Willi. So before I became a stay-at-home mom, I was working full-time in

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Sears Portrait Studio, actually. But even before Sears Portrait Studio, I always loved photography. That's probably why I went to Sears and never thought I would be able to be in business for myself.

Then when my son was born and I had to stay at home with him, of course I went to photography and I said well, I could do this. I did it for free. I just said oh, it's my passion. I'm a stay at home mom now. I don't need to do anything. So I just did it for free for people, mostly family. But then they said stuff and they said stuff and then finally I made some space in my basement and made myself a studio. That's when I started charging. It was probably two years later.

Sarah Petty: Were you doing digital files? Selling digital files at that point?

Stacy Lange: Yeah and I said oh, I don't need all the hibly hoobla of making a mess of everything. I'll just make it easy and I'll make it affordable for people who can't pay for pictures. That was my mindset at the time. I didn't even make enough to pay taxes for a year, to pay taxes on it. I never made enough in all my, what, 11 years of doing it on my own. So it's like I just started again.

Sarah Petty: So what was the moment that you had where you're like this is not working. I'm spending so much time doing this, I'm not making money. What am I doing? Did you have a moment?

Stacy Lange: I did. My husband, he's like, "You're always on the dang computer." He's like, "You got to get off the computer and help with this." He's like, "You're always on there." I said, "I know. I got to get these ready for my clients." He's like, "But you're making 200 bucks." He just didn't see the value in it until I was so excited when I took some of the free classes for you that I kept seeing all over the place

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and read your book. Actually I had your book in 2018. I don't think I read it until 2020.

Sarah Petty: Because you were forced to 'cause there was nowhere to go. I might as well read this book that I have. Okay. So you read the book and then how did the conversation lead to oh my gosh, there's a way to make money doing what I love. When did you have that realization?

Stacy Lange: Yeah, I mean, I think I had it right away. As soon as I started listening to you, I was like yeah, that's the way to go. It just kept bringing me back to my Sears days. Even though they were low priced, they had the same model of how to sell your things and making it easy to sell because people just want your stuff.

Sarah Petty: Right. So it's just a different level of service, but the same concept. You weren't just giving digital files, you were showing people so that they had prints. I love Sears and Penneys and all the places that are doing prints for that. 'Cause a lot of us, that's all we have from our childhood, is if our parents happen to take us to those places. Which mine did not, but I tried it once with my kids and it didn't go well. Luckily that's what made me think, I'm glad I do this a little bit. So-

Stacy Lange: If you would've had me, it would've went well.

Sarah Petty: There you go. Exactly. So did you have the conversation with your husband of hey, I have an idea here? How did it come about and what did he say?

Stacy Lange: Oh yeah. He was skeptical for sure. I was like, "But I've been seeing this for years. The last couple years I've been kind following and taking her free stuff." I said, "I really need to get into these other things."

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Sarah Petty: Well, first off, though, your husband, a lot of husbands I know say, "Hey, go make it first and then you can have the money to invest." I was-

Stacy Lange: Supportive.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. Did he say that or was he kind of not? What was he saying?

Stacy Lange: He was just kind of if you really are going to want to do this, you got to show me a little bit more. Not about me making money right away, but he wanted to hear you a little bit more. So I just gave him more of your things and just told him more about you. He just wanted to make sure it wasn't a scam.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. Somebody who's on the internet.

Stacy Lange: A lot of people think, but I just did my research and talked to even just the people in the group and other people that have been through it. So it was this Julie rally thing too. When I went through it the first time and I can't believe I'm sitting here now talking to you guys. 'Cause I was there. I was where you are.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. It's so funny. I had someone on my team said they talked to someone the other day who said, "I've Googled you. I can't find a bad review. What's going on?" Now we're too good. We better go. Now don't everybody go leave a nasty review. But I think, because we guarantee our things, if people aren't happy, they have 30 days to hop out. They know that they take personal responsibility for getting those results and doing that work. So anyway, long story short, you were like, okay, it's my time. You jumped into a program we have called the deep breakthrough. As you went through the process, what were your biggest ahas?

Stacy Lange: My biggest ahas were just, the community for one was huge for me because you're talking to people that are doing the same thing as you, are where you are.

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That helped me realize all these people are in the same place that I am. So it just made me feel amazing that I had that community. So my other ahas were just knowing in my heart I really didn't have... It was just this feeling I had, this is going to work for me. This is what I needed for the longest time. I just knew it. It was going to work. Even though I was a turtle, I wasn't a turtle about getting the work done. I did my work. I went through everything that I needed to go through, all my worksheets and I did all those, but I was more of a turtle on my processing.

Sarah Petty: Slowly and steady.

Stacy Lange: Yeah, it takes me a little longer to process everything. So I did not get my Julie during the class, which everybody's like that's fine. It's okay as long as you stick with the process. I never questioned that I wasn't going to. It was just a matter of when is it going to happen? Mine just happened.

Sarah Petty: So when you got that Julie, what were you saying to yourself? You knew it. It was a confidence. It wasn't a fear of what if. I know this is coming, and what did the person say and what did you think after you got the Julie?

Stacy Lange: Okay, so my Julie was from... It was a new client that was brought to me by an old client during my digital file model days. I went through the process and I explained everything to her and who I was. She wanted to continue. So I went and met up with her for an IP consultation. Went over all my prices and they didn't blink an eye. They just looked at it and I asked them, "Do you guys want to continue? Let's go ahead and book a date." They booked a date. We did the session and then we booked a date for them to look at their pictures. I had everything, all my ducks in a row. It was easy peasy at that point because I did all the work before to make this point easy as heck.

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Sarah Petty: I love that you said you're kind of a turtle, slow and steady, right? Looking back on the system, do you think that my system is hard or anything crazy about it? I think it's pretty simple. What do you think looking back on it?

Stacy Lange: Yeah, no, I think it's absolutely simple. I think everybody learns in their own way. I don't think... Nothing about it was intimidating to me. Everything went well with me learning. It just takes me a little longer to process, that's all.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. When it's new information, like the seven Bs of the first phone call, it's a whole new way to do it. So you have to go through it a couple times for it to sink in. Then you have to do it, you have to practice it. Then you have to do it and go oh, I missed a step and you do it again. So when you're learning something new, it just takes that repetition. I think when you have a system, it helps you go back and go okay... You can self-evaluate then what did I do wrong? Versus before when you were saying, I just don't know, I was just guessing. Right?

Stacy Lange: Right.

Sarah Petty: I love that. What are you most excited about moving forward with your business? You have two kiddos and they're still young.

Stacy Lange: Oh yeah.

Sarah Petty: So what are you most excited about?

Stacy Lange: I just get a lot more time with them and we get to do different things now. We're planning a Disney trip just from my last Julie. My first Julie. So I'm excited about that. I'm excited about getting more obviously and keep moving forward with the process.

Sarah Petty: Yeah.

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Stacy Lange: I don't have to do many because this wasn't a source of income for us. It was so we could do extra things. So I only need maybe one a month. If I get more, great that can go into savings, go for their college education. Saving basically is what it's for. So this just turned out amazing. Also, my family and extended family I just want to be like haha, I did it.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. Did anyone in your family say it wasn't going to happen or that you shouldn't?

Stacy Lange: Oh yeah. My mom especially. My mom was like, "Okay, nobody's going to pay that." Or my aunt, my mom's sister was kind of the same way. Well, she didn't know anything about pricing, but she just didn't value what I was doing.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. Tell everybody what your first Julie, what the order amount was.

Stacy Lange: Yeah. \$4,052.26.

Sarah Petty: Oh, that gives me chills.

Stacy Lange: \$4,000.

Sarah Petty: Isn't that exciting? Why would you go back to all those hours of leaving your husband and your kiddos? Just because you're an artist and artists don't make money, artists can make money.

Stacy Lange: Yes, they can.

Sarah Petty: Oh my gosh, Stacy, I am so proud of you. Thank you for coming and sharing your story. I know it's inspiring so many people who are telling themselves this isn't their time. You can't go back and get time back.

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Stacy Lange: There is never going back anymore.

Sarah Petty: Yeah. I love it. Thank you, Stacy.

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. 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 for a free training to see if Boutique Breakthrough is right for you.