

Ep #249: Feel Squidgy About Pricing? Listen to This

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With Your Host

Simone Grace Seol

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Hey, I'm Simone Seol, *I Am Your Korean Mom* and I set the world on fire with my pure existence. And guess what? So do you! This is my show, keep listening.

Hey, friend, if you are a practitioner of any sort, and you feel squidgy about charging good prices that reflect the quality of your work, reflect the impact of your work on your clients, and is enough for you to have a beautiful life, you want to really listen to this episode because it's going to change the way you think about things forever.

So, we're going to first start with a little history lesson given that most practitioners, healers, coaches, spiritual service providers, etc. are women, or were socialized as women. Not all, but from where I can see, the numerical majority. Women, for thousands of years, were not used to getting paid at all. In fact, society was literally set up to prohibit our economic activity. In order to engage in economic activity, it helps to be considered fully human, right? With the intelligence and agency of a grown person with a full set of legal rights, in the first place, right?

Well, guess what? For thousands of years, not everywhere in the world but in many parts of the world, women were considered to be less than men. And were even considered the property of men. Women and girls were meant to be passed down from father to husband. And most women only earned the right to vote in the 20th century.

In the United States, an unmarried woman could not get a credit card in her own name, unless she brought a man to cosign until 1974. 1974, y'all! And some banks discounted the wages of women by as much as 50% when calculating their credit limits. Women were more liable to be fired, because she was "liable" to get pregnant. Just for the sin, the crime, of having a womb, women had been considered the economic underclass in so many parts of the world for so long.

So, the idea of women being able to have money, let alone entrusting women with the exchange of value for money, let alone a woman having a lot of money, literally goes against deeply ingrained cultural codes about

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what's okay and what's not. And here's a little more history, when women started making money, it usually involved doing things that women were expected to shoulder up for free up until that point in history. Such as caretaking, teaching children, nursing, cleaning.

This type of work, which involves emotional labor and domestic labor and relational labor had always been extremely devalued. It was considered less valuable than things that men did. And therefore, because it was less valuable, the pay was lower compared to male dominated professions. Even then so many were told they should still do it for free, because it's "helping people". Anytime, it's like, "Oh, you're helping people," you can understand it in your head has traditionally devalued work, right?

This still happens. Those in the helping professions get paid little. And they are told that they should do it for free, or for even lower, out of the goodness of their hearts or the joy of helping people. It was a big enough struggle to get women to be paid for anything at all in the first place, because society was built on women's uncompensated labor.

Now, mental health, healing, coaching, self-development, this kind of thing, as a profession introduced a dangerous new edge to this entire subversive formula. Now, think about this. This field not only is it predominantly done by women, and not only does it heavily rely on emotional labor, it also exchanges women's ideas and thoughts for money. Oh my god, cue the patriarchy's collective gasp of horror! Like, what?

We had to fight so hard just to be able to have our own bank accounts, and to be paid for labor that historically we were expected to do for free, and we're still not paid equal to men according to most statistics. And now, we're not even to get paid, we're not even scrubbing floors or dressing wounds or wrangling children, to be worthy of receiving money. We're saying, "Hey, I have intellectual property. I have emotional labor to give. I have thoughts that add value to human life. Pay me."

And the entire patriarchy is like, "Whoa, what? Excuse me, so your role. What?" Women making great money for her emotional labor and the quality

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of her ideas is deeply subversive. So, please remember all of this. And next time somebody finds issue with the very idea of a practitioner being well paid, or thinks you're charging too much, or says that you should be doing what you do for free; "If you really love helping people do it for free."

Or tries to get you to charge by the hour when that's not how you operate. Or tries to police how you use your money; "If you're a practitioner. If you love helping people, you shouldn't be losing money in that way." According to fucking who? Right? Remember this next time someone finds issue with any aspect, and tries in any way to link the way you earn and have and spend money with some kind of moral deficiency.

Misogyny runs wide and deep. It is in the air we breathe. It's in the water we drink. It is often internalized and weaponized, even by women, to be used against each other and themselves. And when you see it, you can recognize it. Have compassion for our collective wound. And my invitation for you is to lovingly, peacefully, and uncompromisingly set a new standard. Our daughters are going to thank us.

And please don't let anyone price shame you in a culture where it is utterly normalized to pay boatloads of money for things that yield a far less valuable return on your long-term wellbeing. They think about the money that people just pour daily into degrees of dubious value; weddings, status symbols, escapist vacations, escapist 'I deserve it' drinks and drugs, and retail therapy that keep adding up. I could keep going on and on.

Please remember that price shaming isn't coming from a vacuum. It is coming from a culture that also normalizes the erasure of mental health and spiritual needs, erasure of women's emotional labor, as well as the belittling and shaming of the labor of women, period. You know, don't let it escape you that healing, coaching, all these fields, it's a women dominated profession, except at the very top. Sound familiar?

Here's my ethical pricing philosophy. Because, okay, let's be aware of the history and know that in what context, in what historical, cultural, political context, you are being made to feel ashamed and guilty and bad and

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somehow wrong about charging good money, right? So, here's how to charge and be ethical at the same time. And this is very, very simple.

Make sure you're charging in a way where your client base, and everybody's client base is different, make sure your client base is well informed about what they're getting for the price. And be transparent at every aspect of the transaction. So, that's number one. A really simple thing you need to do in order to have your pricing be ethical. Make sure you're transparent. Make sure your clients are well informed about exactly what they're getting for what they're paying.

Number two, make sure you create a culture of marketing, a culture of sales and transactions, where your clients are purchasing from sufficiency and joy and peace and calm and delight. As opposed to purchasing from fear and scarcity and missing out. That, in itself, goes a really long way. We can create one of two conditions for people to buy: One is from sufficiency and peace and calm and joy. And the other is fear and scarcity. Do not accept people's money when they're in fear and in scarcity. I can't talk, sorry. Encourage people. Create an environment, create a culture of your business, where people are buying from safety.

And third, give people a consistent experience of over delivery, right? And feeling like they're getting so much value for the money they're paying. That's something that's worth problem solving for. So, in this podcast, prior, I devoted an entire episode to what it actually means to overdeliver. Because I've actually think most of the world has a misconception about what that means. They think over delivery means hustling out more of your time and energy, again and again and again. And that's not what I think it means.

And so, in that episode, I really encouraged you to dig into it if you're like, "Oh, okay, so what does it actually mean for me to overdeliver? What does that look like?" Because when your clients have an experience of, 'Wow, I feel really cared for in an extraordinary way,' in your offers, in your containers, that's pretty much a guaranteed recipe that they're going to

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keep being your clients. And they're going to refer their friends to you, etc., etc. So, it's a powerfully transformative gift you could give.

But then there are... I distinguish between what I think is real over delivery versus shadow over delivery. And I talk about all of that in Episode 152. The title of episode is "*The Wrong Way To Overdeliver*". So, check that out if you want to learn more about my take on this topic.

I have zero patience, zero, for the kind of price shamers who are like, "How dare you charge...!" Someone feeling salty about the consensual exchange of value between consenting adults, due to their own lack of imagination about what value means and how it works, is not your problem. Now, of course, there is a nuance here. There is something that is worth thinking about conscientiously. And that is how to price in a way where you are charging an appropriate price, but that is also humane.

So, everything that I just said, like making sure that you're transparent, and all your clients are well informed about what they're getting. Making sure they're purchasing from sufficiency and joy and peace instead of fear and scarcity, and giving them an over delivering experience, those will take you a really, really, really long way towards creating, fostering, healthy, mutually nourishing ethical culture of service delivery and transactions.

And here's the other aspect about humane pricing, which is, there's a world of difference between charging a rate that accurately reflects the depth of your experience and the depth of your expertise, and the true value of emotional intellectual labor, which is a lot. But there's a world of difference between that and just hiking up your price at every turn, because you can. Just charging more and more and more just because you think people will pay it. Right? Those are totally different things.

I am going to charge a rate that reflects the value of my work. And that rewards me, the practitioner, for all the training and all the experience and expertise that goes into this operation, right? I'm going to charge a rate that reflects, that is different from, what I can call, borrowing my friend, Mariko's words, "feral capitalism". Capitalism that has gone feral. That's like, "I want

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more, more, more. I can charge more, more, more, just because I can. No, more. I can hike up my price again.” That's a different thing.

Oh, my God, can you hear my baby screaming his head off in the background? I'm like, “Stop crying. Mama has to record the podcast. This show must go on. So...” Sorry about that. We're going to power through it together.

There's a lot of, how can I say it, anxiety around both. And there's a lot of ways that people have made decisions that don't feel great to them in different ways. And so, I want to say, that for some of you, the work is going to be learning how to charge more, and developing the sales skills and the marketing mindset and skills to be able to sell at that higher price consistently. For many of you, you're going to need to learn how to hold the higher price in your body and feel safe and feel safe saying it and feel confident. Knowing that what you deliver is worth that and more. And that's the work.

For others of you, the work is going to be building in more inclusivity by either charging less, or creating flexible pricing or scholarships, right? So, for some of you, the work is to say no to more people who want you to charge less, so that you can be in congruence with the value of what you know your work to be worth. And for others of you, you want to take steps to be more accessible, right? It's the opposite.

Discerning which camp you fall into is a critical part of your business liberation work, I want to say. It's not one or the other. It's you have to discern for yourself. You have to use your own judgment and your own values and your own wisdom and your own discernment to say, “I fall into one camp. I fall into the camp where I need to learn how to charge more, and consistently sell at that price confidently to the people who would love to buy at that price.”

And for others of you, it's, “Oh, my work is to make my staff more accessible.” So, that discernment is critical. And know that women in bodies of color, once again, have been traditionally excluded from

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commerce, and often violently. And supremacist systems will continue to thrive when we are chronically under resourced and pressured to opt out of amassing wealth, and using wealth as leverage to make change in the world.

If you don't charge enough, think of it like you're stealing from yourself to give to others. It really is like that. And when the foundation of your business is self-theft, that's neither effective nor congruent, nor a sustainable place from which to serve. [Inaudible], but you're smart. And I think we can hold it, right? You can charge in a way that feels beautiful to you. Beautiful to the relationships that exist in the ecosystem of your business. And in ways that add beauty to the world. You really can have all three and it's worth figuring out.

I'll talk to you next week.

Hey, if you're looking for a one-stop shop where you can find the best of my teaching, all organized into a beautiful and actionable sequence, guess what? I got you. I took the best of my podcast episodes and created a whole damn workbook around them. It's called *The Simone Starter Pack* and it's the ultimate marketing cheat sheet. I got countless emails from folks who downloaded it, saying, "This free resource is worth more than all these courses I paid thousands of dollars for." So, what are you waiting for? Go grab *The Simone Starter Pack*. The link is in the show notes. I can't wait to see what amazing results you'll get from it.