

Ep #261: The fear of being cancelled

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With Your Host

Simone Grace Seol

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Hey, I'm Simone Seol, *I Am Your Korean Mom* you never knew you needed. Guess what? People need your services. It's not all lost, and they're looking for you right now. Let's help them find you. Let's do this.

Let's talk about being cancelled today. I have opinions about this, even though I don't think I've ever been cancelled. If I have, I don't know about it. I've just talked to so many clients who are afraid to be cancelled, who live in fear of being cancelled, and make a lot of decisions based on avoiding being cancelled.

There's a lot of talk about "cancel culture" this and that, and it really is a factor that affects the way people market, the way people show up and share their opinions. It makes people cautious; it makes people afraid to be themselves.

I have some thoughts about it that I want to tell everybody. Especially after recent conversations I've had with several people actually, people whom I would call friends and peers, who have platforms that are also big, and some of them much bigger than mine, who have been cancelled, for one thing or another; who have had that experience. Talking to them about what it's been like for them, I really feel the need to bring this to you, if you have a vague fear of being cancelled.

The primary thing I want to tell you is that being cancelled is not really a thing. I want to tell you why. Even people who have already been cancelled, aren't really cancelled. If you think of a few people who you think have been cancelled, they probably still have really healthy businesses. They probably are still making a lot of money. They're probably still have lots of fans.

Just because someone's been cancelled, it doesn't mean their business is over, it's actually, in reality, quite the opposite. In reality, their business might temporarily be affected. But if they keep going, if they keep going as if... I mean, if you get cancelled and you use that as a reason to just quit everything and go into hiding, then obviously, you won't have a business anymore.

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But those who don't, you'd be surprised to discover how many people's businesses are actually fine, maybe even better than fine. The thing about businesses is that they're a lot more resilient than you think. That's for a couple of reasons.

The main reason is, something really important that you need to know, that people who actually buy from the businesses are not the same as the masses of people who have opinions about that business. So, for every entrepreneur there's a core group of raving fans who are the ones that actually buy, are the ones that actually make the business a business.

Because you could have 5 million fans, 5 million followers, or whatever, but if none of them are paying you then you don't have a business, right? So, think about it like, if you see someone with a large platform, let's say they have 100,000 followers, that's a lot of followers, right? Out of those 100,000 followers, there's only going to be a tiny, tiny, tiny subset of that number that actually pays. That gives money to this entrepreneur to make their business run, that makes your business profitable.

Those people are not usually... and that's sort of what I'm going to call it the core group of raving fans, right? The core group of raving fans, who are the people who keep the business afloat, are not the same as the masses of people that gather... that just happen when you have a big platform... who may give you the illusion that they are a bigger business than they are.

But they aren't actually the ones that pay them. If they want to go all away, then the business would not be affected because the core group of raving fans, which is a small percentage of anyone's follower count, is what's keeping them afloat.

When someone gets cancelled, what happens is that a lot of that bubble, a lot of the followers, who are never paying them to begin with, get really angry, call the person all kinds of names, say they're evil, say this person's cancelled, and they all leave. They might experience a significant drop in their followers, but then there's not that much of a change in the core group of raving fans.

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Don't get me wrong, the core group of raving fans, that number might also drop a little. But if the entrepreneur isn't packing everything up and burning everything down, they tend to stay. Most of the hate tends to come from people who never paid them in the first place, and probably were never going to pay them.

It's really important for people to understand the difference between the size of somebody's platform and the amount of money they make, right? Because this all goes into our perception of where someone's money is coming from. I know people who have platforms that are 10 times, 100 times bigger than mine, and they're making a fraction of the money that I'm making.

I also know people whose platforms are significantly smaller than mine, just in terms of sheer numbers, and are making more money than I am. Don't be so quick to assume how someone is doing based on what their social media looks like. They could be the most hated person in the world and still be raking in all the money, and be getting lots of love from their core group of fans.

If a business is working, if it's profitable, there's a core group of fans, and they are pretty unlikely to be affected by whatever cancellation campaign. I'm not saying they won't be, they might be a little bit. But if you, again, are not going to pack up and just disappear your business, then your raving fans won't either.

Think about Andrew Tate... I think he's a piece of shit. Everyone I know thinks he's a piece of shit. And, guess what? He's still getting all kinds of love, and probably all the money from all the schmucks around the world who continue to think he's great and buy from him.

Actually, every idiot I can think of, who is doing online business... and I'm mostly thinking of people like Andrew Tate who spew obvious, ignorant bullshit... their name keeps coming up because they have a core base of raving fans that constitute a large enough business for them.

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I've found that, actually, the more incendiary, the more controversial, the more "problematic" your opinions are, the more people might hate you or misunderstand you or want to cancel you, but for those exact same reasons, a lot of times the core group of raving fans will love you more and rally around you more and be more fiercely adoring and protective of you.

The second thing I need you to know is, the world is very fake and people's attention spans are very short. So, you might think that someone has been thoroughly cancelled. But the fact of the matter is, whoever you're thinking of, the majority of the world probably has no idea who they are. Whoever you're thinking of, they're probably famous in a particular niche. Even if they're on the news sort of famous, they're probably famous in wherever you consume the news and not in other parts of the world.

I kind of straddle two cultures, in that I'm American and I'm Korean. I live in South Korea with this American perspective, because I was raised in the U.S. as well. I'm always flabbergasted by how many people, that I think everyone in the world knows, people don't know in Korea. Because in my mind, when I think everyone, I think everyone in the U.S. And the US isn't everyone in the world, obviously. I'm like, "Duh, how ignorant am I?"

So, when we think, "Oh my god, everyone in the world," that's really likely a very, very, very, very, very, very tiny slice of the world, of social media, of whatever it is. Even people who have been cancelled in the biggest way, guess what? There's not that many people, in the grand scheme of things, that even know that that person was cancelled. They continue to get new eyes, new attention, new business, from people who never even knew what they were prior to them getting "cancelled." And, they're doing fine.

So many people's businesses are like this. So many people. One, the world is really big. And two, people have such short attention spans. And so, people get cancelled all the time, and then people forget that people have been cancelled.

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Yeah, sure, there might be murmurings here and there, “Oh, did you know they were cancelled for this and this and that?” Guess what? No one really remembers stuff nowadays.

I feel pretty old, online, even though I'm not; I'm 37. I've been on social media for, it feels like, 20 years, and I have just seen a lot come and go. I have seen people really get into something and then forget about it. There's a new wave of something, something else is trendy, and someone was cancelled. And then it's like, who was that person, again?

Things change so fast, people's attention spans are so short, and this cancellation that we all fear so much? Short memory, short attention span, short life cycle of whatever people think is a big deal.

As I was thinking about what to say in this episode, I thought of a prime example of cancellation not being a real thing. Which is, think about Donald Trump. He has been cancelled so many fucking times for some of the most heinous crimes that you can imagine; like sexual assault, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And, guess what? It's 2023, and half the country is still threatening to vote for him.

If that's not evidence that being cancelled doesn't actually work, that being cancelled is not really a thing, I don't know what is. He didn't want to be cancelled, so he decided he wasn't and he just keeps going.

Remember what I said about the core base of raving fans, right? The core base of raving fans that keep an entrepreneurial float. The core base of raving fans that keep Donald Trump afloat. It doesn't matter what the rest of the world thinks about him, right? It doesn't matter what the rest of the social media think about whoever it is, it's always going to be the core base of raving fans that make someone's platform, that makes someone's career.

The other thing I wanted to tell you about being cancelled, is that I already mentioned that I had some friends, peers, who have big platforms, and who've experienced being cancelled. And, guess what? They find this

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freedom, I have found from talking to them and seeing them, that is really rare online. They are some of the freest, most courageous, most authentic people that I know.

Because, guess what? They've already been cancelled. They know that it doesn't destroy you. They've learned the lessons from it. And, look, I'm not trying to make it sound like it's so fun and easy and no big deal, it's definitely hard.

It's definitely not something that anybody would recommend, to have lots of people say negative things about you. I don't mean, in any way, to sort dismiss how difficult that can be for a human being. I hope it never happens to me.

But people for whom it did happen, they're some of the freest people I know, because they know that it didn't destroy them. They actually have gotten to the other side and they've realized, "Huh, turns out a million people having random ass, misinformed opinions about me doesn't actually impact my life and my business at all."

They have kind of unearthed a voice that lives in a place beyond the fear of other people's opinions. In some of these cases, the people that I've talked to directly, they're like, "You know what? I learned a lesson. What I learned from what happened was this and this..." For others, it was a cancellation based on something that was totally not even true, right? There was a smear campaign that was not even true.

And so, for whatever the reason, they all learned something from that bad experience, and they're going stronger than ever. Once again, the core group of raving fans are keeping their businesses profitable. Depending on how hard they're working on their businesses, that group of core fans could be growing. They're thriving. From how their businesses are doing, you would never know that they'd been cancelled.

So, I'm telling you all this, once again, not to be like, "Being cancelled is no big deal." No, I'm not saying that. It's a tough thing, and I'm against "cancel

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culture;” I think it’s inhumane. I just wanted to share my observations with you to help to ease this fear. Something that I remind myself of often too, is that being cancelled is not real. It's not real. Even for people who have been cancelled, no one’s actually has been cancelled. If you look at how people are doing, who you think has already been cancelled.

I want to end this episode by sharing a couple of quotes from one of my favorite thinkers on the topic of being true to yourself and speaking your mind, and being free from the fear of others opinions. That is Africa Brooke, on Instagram. She is just so fiercely smart. What she says makes me think every time, and I highly recommend you follow her.

I want to quote to you two things from her feed. “What is this? Instead of censoring and editing your honest thoughts out of fear, what if you worked on trusting that what you have to say is worth taking responsibility for? What if you made trusting yourself and your worldview a priority?” So good, right?

Instead of trying not to be cancelled, instead work on really, really trusting yourself, taking responsibility for what you believe, believing things that you want to take responsibility for, and saying things that you'd be glad to take responsibility for. I love this reminder to focus back on our relationship with ourselves, or our own integrity, instead of just perpetually minding other people's thoughts, which we can never control.

I want to share this one last quote, also from Africa Brooke, which is, “Life is much more enjoyable when you live it as though you've already been cancelled.” I love that. I told you, those who have already been cancelled... quote unquote cancelled, because it's not a real thing... are some of the freest, most courageous, most joyful people I know on social media. And, it's true.

When you are gripped with the fear of ‘oh my god, what if I get cancelled?’ Ask yourself, well, what if... Let's pretend I've already been cancelled. I don't need anyone's approval. I don't need anyone to think that I'm a good person. I don't need anyone to affirm that I'm good, because I know I'm

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good. I believe in what I believe in, and I stand for what I stand for. I just get to take up space the way I am.

Life is much more enjoyable when you live it as though you've already been cancelled. So, so good. Thank you, Africa, Brooke. I hope you all go and follow her. I'm going to put her link in the show notes.

So, that's it. That's my little note/encouragement for you to live a life, to have a platform, have a voice, exercise your voice, in a way that is free from fear of others' opinions. May we all live as though we've already been cancelled. I'll talk to you next week.

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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.