

Ep #272: The Real Story Behind My Painful Launch

Full Episode Transcript



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, everybody, you're going to have to forgive me for my voice in this episode. I am sick, I caught a throat-something. I am on the mend, so I'm feeling okay, thank you. But my voice is a little funny today, so it is what it is.

I want to share with you a vulnerable thing. I just completed the most difficult launch/creative process that I have been through in a really long time. I want to tell you the story about it because I think it's important to tell stories where not everything is just roses and rainbows, hunky-dory, ease, delight, and just prancing across a meadow or whatever. Not everything is like that.

This last launch for me, especially didn't feel like that. I want to share with you the full story. So, my most recent launch for my most recent offer, Slumber Party, which is actually ongoing right now at the time of recording. Now that it's already launched and it's happening, I can say it is so much fun and so awesome in every way.

But working on the Slumber Party material was the opposite of awesome. It was the opposite of fun. In fact, it felt like pulling teeth every step of the way. So, Slumber Party is this two-week container where everybody immediately downloads a 101-page playbook. It contains all the teaching and all the learning activities that we're going to do together for the duration of the two weeks.

And so, this 101-page playbook is the sort of the crux of the value, that was going to be the underpinning of everything that we learn, all the practices, all the culture of it, everything; that was going to be everything. So, my main job was to create this playbook from scratch and to finish it.

It has been brutal. It has been brutal. Creating it has been brutal, and therefore, to an extent, marketing it has also been brutal. My husband, who

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has seen me up close for the past, I don't know, six, seven years, has said, "I have never seen you struggle the way that you've been struggling these past few months working on this thing." And, it's true.

I often compare my creative processes to a pregnancy, and let me tell you this particular "pregnancy" almost took me out. Not because I didn't want to write it, I desperately wanted to. Not because I didn't believe in the project, I believed in it with my whole heart. But because it felt like such a daunting challenge.

It was like I had to answer this question that I've been turning over my head for years. Slumber Party is this program that teaches you how to market to the unconscious mind. I've been wanting to teach how to market to the unconscious mind since the very first day I taught marketing, because I was first trained as a hypnotist. And so, I knew that everything was about unconscious processes. I've been wanting this for years.

I was like, "Okay, if I'm going to have to get my shit together, and pull this curriculum together, I have to write down what I know and make it good, and make it a thing that's going to be fun and useful for people." And so, I was telling myself this has to be new and fresh enough as an approach to feel genuinely interesting. But it also has to be understandable. It has to be accessible. It had to be substantive and useful.

I hate when things are... you buy something for 100 bucks, and it's all fluff. I hate that. So, I knew it had to be super substantive and super pragmatic. But I still wanted it to feel light and playful. Hello, I wanted to name it Slumber Party because I wanted it to feel like a really fun party where you get to play games.

This being a course on marketing, where people are going to be implementing stuff in real time, it has to empower people to take risks and venture outside of their comfort zones but also be able to feel safe and nourishing at the same time. I mean, that's a tall order, and it gets even worse.

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I wanted it to be effective, I wanted it to work, and I wanted it to be strategically smart, but I also wanted it to land like a comforting 'ah, yes,' a sip of hot cocoa on a winter day. I wanted it to land like that, in their nervous system, for all of my people who are empathetic, creative humans with a heart of gold. Who are burnt out on conventional marketing and desperately wanted more soulful and ethical alternatives.

Trying to meet all of these standards at the same time, it was like trying to compose a symphony where I had to write in different parts for 180 different instruments, make them all sound good together, and weave a coherent structure with everything together.

And let me tell you, for the past few months, every single day, I tore my hair out. I groaned my way through countless cups of chai that I would compulsively make to deal with the stress; I seriously drank so much chai.

I was going to sell it for 100 bucks. I know that a lot of people think that 100 bucks is nothing, it's like a low-price offer, but I don't think like that at all. One hundred bucks is a lot of money. There were times when 100 bucks meant a week of groceries; it was like a lot of money. I don't take anyone trusting me with that kind of money for granted. I want to fucking deliver if somebody didn't give me 100 bucks.

So, needless to say, that didn't really help with the easing of pressure. And if I'm being really honest, I even considered canceling this launch just as I was doing it, like three weeks before the start date. I had a serious conversation with myself where I was like, "Maybe I give everyone who already bought a refund. Maybe I just don't do this. Maybe I just end 2023 with nothing. Maybe I just need to take a break," because I felt so low.

It was just looming on the horizon; there's a shark, it was looming. I couldn't finish it. And if you're wondering, "Wait, three weeks before the start date you were still working on it?" Yes, I was still working on it. I just couldn't fucking finish it.

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I thought, “Well, what's the worst thing that can happen? I refund a bunch of money. Some people are going to be disappointed, but they're going to live. I'll be a little bit embarrassed, but I'm going to live. It's going to be okay.” I seriously contemplated it. But at the end, I was like, “Okay, you know what? You've already gotten far enough. I might as well just finish it.” I just slogged my way through the finish line.

By the way, right now, as I'm talking to you, obviously, it is finished. Up until the very end, there was no point at which the clouds parted and the angels sang, and it finally started to click and started to feel magical and filled with ease and clarity. Nope, that did not arise. That never happened. Up until the very last edit I was like, “Ugh, I'm pretty sure I'm not doing this right. Here goes nothing.”

Well, like I said, after all of that, all of that drama, Slumber Party opened. I honestly wonder if I got sick because Slumber Party finally opened after all the drama, and my body was like, “Oh, my God, now we get to just fall apart.” So, I got sick. I don't know, maybe. And so, at the time of recording, it's been going on for like a week. It's been one of those things where I've just had to just hold on to every last shred of hope that it wasn't total trash and all the pain was worth it.

I just have pages and pages of notes that I'm gathering, testimonials I'm gathering, from people who are saying, “This was the best 100 bucks I've ever spent. This is genius. I'm going to be working in this workbook for life. It feels so good to learn sales from a loving perspective. This one part of the workbook is worth 10 times the price of the whole program. This other part is worth 10 times the price. It's like nothing I've ever seen. I can't believe how much you put in this. This is magic.”

Just so many comments like this. Like I said, since it opened, I've been like, “Okay.” I share this story because I want to reassure you... Well, okay, if you're listening to this and you don't have Slumber Party, I think you should come get it, because it actually is incredible.

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I can say now, I can see it now and I can own it now. I can say it now, that the little shred of hope that my brain felt was fucked up, but actually it was everything, turned out to be validated by my clients' feedback. It's actually fucking awesome. And if you're like, "Hm, I'm curious about marketing to the unconscious mind," please come check it out; it's 100 bucks. It lives on my website.

But the main reason I wanted to share this is because I want to reassure you that some deeply good things do not feel good to make. Some incredible places that we can arrive at, the journey to get there does not feel incredible. And the best we can do is to keep putting one foot in front of the other, with as much faith as we can muster.

And guess what? On some days, that is not very much faith at all. And on some days, we are just cursing and bitching and moaning along the way. Crying on the shoulders of our loved ones, and being like, "I don't know if I can do this anymore." This was me for so long, weeks and weeks.

If you're going through one of those journeys that feel so hard and never ending, I just want you to know, you're doing so much better than you think. You're growing in more ways than you know. So many things are coming together in ways that you can't possibly fully see right now.

And one day, you're going to look back at all this and think, "Wow, I was so glad I kept going. It was so freakin worth it." I promise you, one day you're going to look back and think that. In the meanwhile, I'm sending you all of my love.

So, having shared that, I will tell you that I actually shared this story with other people on my email list. Somebody asked me some really good questions, sort of follow-up questions, about this, and I wrote down some pretty long answers and shared them inside the Slumber Party Facebook group. I want to share them with you, too.

So, the question was: I've heard a lot of people talk about creating for their business and how "the energy" you have while creating matters, whether

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that's for content creation or offer creation. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on this? Because even though you mentioned it being stressful for you, to birth this into the world, as a consumer, the energy I feel when I read it is so grounded and empowering. It feels like everything I didn't know I needed.

I think that's a great question. Because 'the energy behind the creation matters,' that's something that I would say. I'm pretty sure I have said it. And so, how does that square with me creating this thing that feels really good to my people to receive, but it was like fucking terrible to create on my end? This was my answer.

So, not all challenging emotions, not all challenging processes are "bad" energy. I think there's a big difference between, for lack of a better expression I'm going to call it "clean pain versus dirty pain." I'm pretty sure I've covered that before on my podcast, but let me just explain.

I think what I was going through a lot was clean pain, when I was sitting my ass down and I persisted in trying to finish it. Even though it felt terrible, and I had no evidence that it was building up to something good. Because I believed so strongly in the vision that I had for it.

That vision is what got me started. It's what got me all the way through. It didn't feel clear enough, but I was like, "There's something here I have to figure out." It felt so important and necessary that I do this work, that even if I didn't succeed... Let's say it didn't sell that well, and people didn't really like it that much. Even if it didn't succeed, I don't think I would have been okay with myself unless I knew for myself that I gave it my all.

So, it felt like devotion. It felt like commitment, stemming from a deep place inside me, as opposed to these happy, excited, magical, bubbly feelings. And let me tell you, I love me some happy, excited, magical bubbly feelings, right? I am used to those. I'm an ENFP Pisces. I am happy, excited, magical, bubbly personified, in many ways.

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And so, I was used to being able to tap into those emotions when I create for my business. So, guess what? It actually really scared me that I couldn't access those. This was the first time, I think, that I really proved to myself that while those feelings are lovely to have, they're not necessary. I'm capable of drawing from a different fuel source. And, I did.

So, when someone said 'as a consumer,' which I'm so glad to hear that the energy felt grounding and empowering, what that person probably felt was my dedication and love for the project. My dedication and love for the project led me through that path of pain.

However, that's very different from, let's say, the struggle of slogging your way through a project where your heart is really not in it at all. Or you feel resentful, or somebody else is making you do it, or you're doing it out of a "should," or there's some kind of pressure or fear that is motivating it. That's different. I think when you make something from that energy, it probably feels different. But that's not what was happening with me.

The second question that I wanted to share my answer to is: How did you navigate continuing to work on it, when you were so committed to the vision but execution felt like garbage because of all the pressure?

That's exactly what it felt like, execution felt like garbage. So, once I set a deadline... I was like, it's going to begin November 29th. I told everybody. I announced it. I slapped together a sales page, the buy button, and my team now had deadlines they're working towards. I couldn't back out.

Well, I mean, technically, I could have. Like I said, I contemplated canceling and refunding everybody. But in the end, I was like, ugh, I've got to do this, even if it's... whatever. I have to X something out of my system. And in those moments, a practice that I often turn to is what I call the "worst-case scenario" practice.

It works like this: I let my mind imagine the very worst-case scenario, which is, I finish it, I finish the Slumber Party material. It's not the best work I've ever done. It doesn't end up selling very much, and it doesn't end up

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helping people very much. That's the worst-case scenario for something that I could make for my business; that it doesn't make me money and it doesn't help people. Just saying that, it just fills my heart with *panicky sounds*.

So, I was like, "Okay, that's the worst-case scenario. What would I do then?" My mind went to that place and realized, well, having an experience like that, at some point, is probably hard to avoid if I want to have a long career.

It's one thing if I want to be a bright flash in the pan, but if I want a career with longevity, over the years, over decades even, it can't always be a series of triumphs and rainbows and daisies. It can't always be 'I'm winning,' everything's great, everything's successful, everybody loves everything I do, I feel amazing and I'm doing my best work.

It is completely delusional to think that's all your experience will be if you have a career that spans decades. And, I hope to have a career that spans decades. I was like, this kind of thing, disappointing experience, probably was something that was coming anyways.

I thought to myself, "Okay, I can't pretend that it's going to feel good. It'll be humbling. It'll probably be crushing to my ego a little bit. But it's nothing that's going to kill me. It's nothing I can't come back from. I'll do some healing, I'll pick myself up, I'll lick my wounds for a little bit. And then, I'll get back up and keep going, like I always have. I will be okay."

And so, once I got to that place of okay, I know I'm going to be okay, even with the worst-case scenario, it gave me enough of a little slice of peace of mind to keep going. Because that eased the pressure a little bit. It was like, okay, I would love for this to be brilliant and successful and super-duper helpful to people. But if it's less than that, I'm not going to die. That just gave me enough spaciousness to just get it to the finish line. I got it to the finish line because just getting it done was important to my heart.

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Here's the final question that I want to answer about this, which I also thought was really thoughtful, and I think useful; would be useful for you to hear. The question is: Did your experience creating the playbook make Slumber Party harder to market? Or did it ever shake your confidence in what you're offering people and the results they could expect from it?

So, yes and no. In the sense that, typically in my own process, I decide to launch something new and announce it once I have a clear and compelling enough skeleton of it in my head, right? The skeleton is like, "Okay, so what makes this... I have this idea, what makes it unique and valuable? What's the core of it? What's the hook of how I would market it? And, why people would want to buy it?"

That's all I need to be certain about. I have to be certain about the quality of it, how it's going to be interesting and useful for them, what's going to make people want to buy, and knowing that I can deliver. So, it's all in my head as a skeletal structure.

And in the process of marketing, I usually market and create at the same time, as I'm marketing it, I kind of fill it in and I flesh out the skeletal structure. This isn't my first rodeo; I've followed the same creative process many times. It has never failed me. I always do it. This is my flow. As soon as I have a strong skeleton, I just know, and I knew this time.

The skeleton, I never doubted. I was 100% congruent that it's powerful, it is effective, and it's gold. Which is what gave me the confidence to start marketing it without any hint of wobbliness from day one. I knew it was going to work, at some level that was important to me.

However, the filling it in part, where I'm like fleshing it out beyond the skeleton, was a slower, more painful slog than I'd ever been through before. That did make marketing tougher. Not because I doubted what it's about, but because the more I have filled in, the more I can talk about.

The more stuff I have to work with, the more something concrete takes shape that I can point to this and say, "Hey, look at this. I can get excited

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about this part and that part.” And so, there are many times where I was like, “Aw man, it's just not getting filled in fast enough. I just don't know what to talk...”

That did make my marketing feel a little bit less like, boom! than it used to be; when other times I had an easier time filling in the skeleton. That is a really weird visual, but you know what I mean? So, this time, it was just different.

Like I said, I share this because it's really important for you to know that everybody has tough creative processes. Everybody has tough launches. If somebody says they don't, they're fucking lying. I have some suspicions about why it was this way for me this time. I think it definitely had to do with the state of the world, where the air was just heavy. The air was just heavy.

And, I think I was in the process of consolidating and integrating a lot of personal growth, spiritual growth, as well as business stuff, at the same time. The project was genuinely more challenging to me than a lot of other stuff that I'd done in the past.

In the end, I'm most proud that I didn't give up. Even though, if it was the right thing to give up, I would have. But I was like, “You know what? I made it through.” That's the first thing.

The second thing is, I'm really, really gratified that the reaction is just everything that I could have hoped for, and more, on my best day. I feel like the initial conviction that I had, for why this needs to exist in the world, has been validated.

So, life is a whole box of chocolates, as they say, you never know what you're going to get. It's always a crazy mix of things. I just wanted to share a bit of my process with you, and also give you a little bit of encouragement and comfort. If you're going through one of those tough patches, it's lasting longer than you like, you're not alone. I'm sending you my love. I'm sending you my courage. And I know that it's all taking you somewhere, somewhere good. You'll find out, and you'll see then what it was all about.

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Alright, I'll talk to you next week. Bye.

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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.