

# Ep #113: Why Michelle Ward is burning it all down

## Full Episode Transcript



With Your Host

**Simone Grace Seol**

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Welcome to Joyful Marketing! I am Simone Seol and I teach you how to get your life coaching practice fully booked without having to pay for ads, buy Instagram followers, or complicated sales funnels. It's not rocket science and you can do it, too. Listen on to find out how.

Hey friends, today I have the special exquisite pleasure of bringing to you a conversation with my very first life coach ever, under whose guidance I quit my day job for the first time ever and transitioned into entrepreneurship for the first time ever. Her name is Michelle Ward and she has been in the business obviously for a long time, over a decade. She is a consistent multi six figure earner. She has helped to launch a career of luminaries like, well, me and also Alexandra Franzen and Tiffany Hon, Esme Wong, L'Erin Alta, among so many others.

She's been featured on Forbes; Newsweek, New York Magazine, USA Today, the list goes on and on. She's the author of two books. One of the most valuable things to me when I was just starting out and building my coaching business was be able to hear two coaches who are at a really high level, talk shop. And throughout this conversation you're going to hear how Michelle, who's in her 12<sup>th</sup> year of business and is very well established in the field.

You're going to hear how she's problem solving about her business and her own mind drama stuff and the kind of difficult decisions that she's still making when she's already working at such a high level. And I'm going to talk about my experiences as well. For so many of us in the coaching industry who are fairly new to the scene, fairly new like in their first two or three years of building their business, we don't have this perspective like we're going to be at this for a while. We're going to be building our business for decades. I mean that's the whole idea.

We want to build something that we can sustain for a long time but we don't often have this long view. We don't operate from this assumption of I'm going to be experimenting and iterating for not just the next two years, but 10 years and 20 years to come. And that can make us a little bit shortsighted.

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So I really invite you to listen to the following conversation with this perspective that I'm committing to a life of entrepreneurship means that I've got to make this whole experimenting and trying things and learning a way of life. And it's going to continue being this way even when I'm making multiple six figures, million dollars and beyond. So specifically today we're going to cover some really interesting things.

Michelle's going to share her story of how after over 10 years she's choosing to simplify her business and give up incredibly lucrative offers that make her tons of money and sell out all the time. It's not hard for her to keep selling them, but she's going to stop selling them anyway. Why? She's going to tell us. And we're going to talk about why pursuing the path of ease is the best way to scale and why it can be so hard for overachievers to let things be easy.

And we're also going to talk about when is the right time to stop doing one-on-one coaching and scale to group. And why you shouldn't necessarily rush to get there. We're going to talk about why diversifying your income stream in a coaching business might have been a good strategy in the past but maybe not so much anymore.

And so many other things about what it takes to succeed in the coaching industry, our thoughts about the future of the industry. And just all the bumps on the roads that we've both been on, all the stuff I wish I could have been a fly on the wall for to people to hear when I was starting out.

I hope that you're going to enjoy this conversation and walk away with such a renewed, just such a longer term perspective that allows you to really love and enjoy where you are in your business building right now. And focus on the right things that are going to set you up on a really successful path to be able to scale. Presenting to you Michelle Ward.

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Simone: So we're going to talk about what it's like to be in the game for over 10 years. And so let me just ask you, why are you burning everything down?

Michelle: Why I'm burning everything down. It's funny because I have been saying I'm folding the When I Grow Up Coach and I'm launching 90 Day Business Launch as its own business. And my friends who are big named coaches, who are part of my own little mastermind. They're like, "No, that language seems like When I Grow Up Coach failed." It's not about folding, it's not about – this is me...

Simone: So just for context, so Michelle's brand for 10 years was When I Grow Up Coach.

Michelle: Yes, When I Grow Up.

Simone: It's exactly what it sounds like. She helps you figure out what you do when you grow up but not anymore because that's not happening.

Michelle: Yeah. So here's what's interesting, I launched that, and I'll give the super quick timeline, that was when I launched back in 2008, I've been full-time as When I Grow Up Coach since March of 2010.

Simone: That was like a million years ago in internet time.

Michelle: It was a million years ago. People hear that and they're like, "We were dinosaurs like walking on your blog back then." And they'll tell me like...

Simone: Was there internet back then? We don't know.

Michelle: When people, people, like bee-boo-bee insert AOL's sound here. And it's not even, people will say, "What would have changed about the way you marketed your business?" And I was like, "Everything." Back then it was like blog comments and Twitter.

Simone: Oh my God, blog comments.

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Michelle: [inaudible] and blog comments and Twitter was how you'd market yourself. Not so much anymore. So I launched in 2008, I was working as an executive assistant for a financial consulting company. I got certified as a life coach. I got engaged. I got married. Two years and seven months later I left my job. In March of 2010 I said, "I have saved up five months' severance, I've been working on this business for two years. I think I have a pretty strong foundation under me. Let me see how this goes."

And knock on wood I have not had to look back since then and really what...

Simone: We're not going to knock on wood that's like **[crosstalk]**.

Michelle: Knock on wood, okay, good, thank you, I will not do that, I take it back. And it felt stupid. It felt silly. In the middle of the recession I was going into my very stable job that gave me \$60,000 a year plus a bonus going, "I'm going to be a When I Grow Up Coach." And it just felt like oh my God, what am I doing? And also oh my God, this is what I have to do, I can't do anything else. I have to try. I have to put myself out there. If I knew anything it was that I was very employable. And I was like, "If it doesn't work and I need to go back I'll just find another job."

But I didn't need to do that and really I have found my niche, my specialty, my people, and working with creative women to help them discover, launch or build their dream businesses. That's what they came to me for. I realized that pretty early on. And I created everyone to serve the women in these three buckets, Discover Your Dream Business, Launch Your Dream Business, Build Your Dream business. And first it started as career coaching and it took me a few years to even kind of say, "No, it's not about traditional careers."

When someone comes to me and wants résumé help, I'm not your person. I'm here to speak to the business aspect of things. And in 2016 I launched a program called 90 Day Business Launch with my friendleague, that's my friend who's a colleague, her name is Laura Simms of Your Career Homecoming. Shout out to Laura, she's amazing. And we joined forces and

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said what we were finding as career coaches back then was people just wanted to be told what to do.

And we were in the game for so long, I feel like I'm on The Wire, I've just finished binging The Wire. And I feel like as we talk about the game. We've been in the game so long, we were both in the game so long at that point, we could see – and your [inaudible] are so sweet. I saw with you what was possible, where you could go, what you could do.

And I'm able to see that so often for my clients that to try to hold that back or to try to get them to get there but not – what if we just told them, “Okay, give us a dump of everything in your head around your business and we're going to extract the good parts and see the connecting threads. We're going to deliver to you a business plan that is going to give you your business name and your elevator pitch, and your first offer, and your pricing, and your marketing plan and all those pieces that are very...”

Simone: It's like starting a business in a box.

Michelle: Yes. But personalized, so customized and then an action plan of do this month one, do this month two, do this month three. And we did that kind of in a vacuum where it was just me and her for this group of I think 10 women or 20 women. And we charged a stupidly low amount of money just to see will this work, what happens? And it worked really well. It sold out super quickly. We were really good at it. We realized what we needed was more follow-up. So it turned into like it goes beyond just giving you the plan. Now we're going to be with you for the 90 days and help you launch.

So we ran it that way until the end of 2017 and then she said to me, “Michelle, my business is going in a different direction. I just want to go all in on this one program that I'm doing. I need to stop, I need to pull myself out of 90 Day Business Launch and you have my blessing to do whatever you want to with it.” And I was like, “I don't want to do this alone. I don't want to touch it.” I didn't want to take what we were doing together and do it by myself, I was not interested and so I was about to throw it away.

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And my amazing business coach at the time, Lena West, Lena was like, “No, I’m not allowing you to do this because there is a big hole in your business.” I had a program at the time called Discover Your Dream Business that pretty much no one was buying. But I really wanted them to. I was really forcing it. And then I had a program called Double Your Client Base and I needed the launch piece in the middle, but I was about to throw it out because I was just like, “No, I don’t want to do it by myself.”

And she said, “Not so fast. How can this work, where it’s you and your client, what can you do?” So we figured it out and in 08/2018 I picked it up by myself. I offered it mostly one-on-one. I had the price point fairly high and was on a wait list continuously, was selling out before I could even put spots up.

It was obvious that the value was there, people got it and the women who really saw that vision of I know I can be an entrepreneur. And I know this is the business I want to start. I just know that I need the clarity, and the accountability, and the follow through and a plan to get there. Here take my money. And I realized probably about six months ago that if I really put all my eggs in the 90 Day Business Launch basket and I was really yearning to streamline my business. And at some points I was running five programs at a time.

Simone: That’s a lot.

Michelle: And my marketing message was all over the place because sometimes I’m talking about Discovering Your Dream Business, and sometimes I’m talking about Launching, and sometimes I’m talking about Building. I said, “Oh my gosh, what if I just focus on the launch piece?” And I think if I rework this so that it becomes a group program so I could serve at this point, 20 women at a time, we go through this work together. I can lower the price point for them. I could still do one-on-one for anyone who wants.

But I think I could help launch a 1,000 businesses in eight years and I want, game over, that’s what I want to do, it’s so obvious.

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Simone: So simple and elegant now.

Michelle: Yes, well, thank you, yes. And it was just also really apparent. I had a former client pretty much the day before I made my decision and it was kind of simmering in my head. I had a former client email me, introducing me to someone she knew and said, “I want to introduce you to so and so, she said to me that she doesn’t know what she wants to be when she grows up.” And I was like, “You have to talk to Michelle.” And I was just like, “I can’t help you, I don’t do that anymore.”

So it just became so apparent that this isn’t – it’s not who I am. It’s not what I do. It’s not, it’s just it’s not.

Simone: Okay. What I want everybody to pay attention to in this epic story is just like listen to how Michelle was treating her business constantly like this one big experimentation. Because she’s over 10 years in and she’s like, “I’m going to try this. Is this going to work? Is that going to work? Let me introduce it like this and see the results and then refine it afterwards.” Because I think what so many people think is that if I just get the perfect offer, and the perfect niche, and the perfect tag line and the perfect da, da, da. I’ll set it up perfectly in the beginning and then I’ll be set for life.”

Or if I’m not getting the results I want it’s because my little perfect thing isn’t perfect. And you just never stop iterating and experimenting. And Michelle just told a story of how many things she had and all this drama. But every year since she started her business she’s been making really good fucking money as she was experimenting and tweaking.

Michelle: Yes. It’s been an upward trajectory every year which is exciting. But also sometimes hard to reconcile like am I really shutting down this multi six figure business in order to just say, “I’m focusing on this thing.” And every part of me is going, “Yeah. No, that’s what I’m doing. This feels right. This feels smart. This feels like the next iteration.” And I think that there is also a big mindset shift here of – and as a former actor I see the When I Grow Up Coach was almost a role that I played even though it’s me, but felt like this is my Monica, this is my persona.



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And now I'm like, "No, I'm a fucking CEO of 90 Day Business Launch." And so to kind of step into not disconnecting or detaching from owning the fact that I'm still a coach. But to say, "I'm a CEO. I'm a business coach within a kind of different framework than I've always seen myself, than I was taught." Is like really scary because now it feels like I go from, this little coaching, I'm a little coach, [inaudible] coaching but When I Grow Up Coach, isn't that cute [inaudible]. I'm CEO of 90 Day Business Launch.

Simone: It's kind of like, tell me if this resonates but it's almost like before, so much of it was based on Michelle the persona. And now it's like Michelle's the CEO of this body of work and this intellectual property that has been proven to get people amazing results. And your job is to get it in the hands of more people.

Michelle: Yeah. And I'm hoping now for the first time I can really see a clear path to selling my business in 20 years when I'm ready to retire and actually having someone that could buy it and getting a lot of money because I have this proven process, this proven formula. I could see where, if and when I want to bring on other coaches or a salesperson or whatever, it's so much easier and clear cut than, "Do you want to buy the When I Grow Up coach with my five programs and my list of thousands of people. But also some are interested in this and some don't want this thing?"

No, nobody wants that. So there's also that - a kind of retirement there.

Simone: Make it easy for people to say yes to it by making it simple.

Michelle: Yes. [**Crosstalk**].

Simone: There's just one, I help you do this one thing.

Michelle: That's it. That's it. That's it. And I can't wait, like building my new website, just like yeah, here's my Work With Me page, and someone wants to do it one-on-one, there's a little FAQ section. "Can I work with you one-on-one?" And I'm like, "Yeah, no problem, here's the structure. Here's the

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placing. Let me know if that's what you want to do." I don't need a separate pay, I don't need a separate thing, I don't do this like just...

Simone: Simpler.

Michelle: That's it, simple, simple, simple, streamlined and simple.

Simone: Yeah. This is so interesting because when we were emailing each other about recording this podcast you told me, "I can just put all my numbers out there. We can just have an honest conversation." And I was just thinking I am talking to a bunch of other coaches who are at the multiple six figure level and even those who have surpassed a million. And it's just so interesting to me, the kind of different experiences people have because some coaches are just really tired at the multiple six figure level.

And it kind of sounds like you're a little bit tired [**crosstalk**].

Michelle: Yes. Well, it's so funny you say that. I'm tired of overwhelming myself. I'm never tired of my clients, you know what I mean? I'm never tired of the work. I mean I think 2020 has made everyone super tired. But also I'm kissing the ground that I essentially, you know, I made almost the same exact amount of money as I made last year. I have proven that I have a business that is sustainable, and certain, and stable, and solid. I'm like, "Yay, amen and hallelujah." But also if I ever have to run four programs at a time, don't get me out of bed. I can't do it anymore.

So there's definitely that piece too of I am craving more bandwidth, I am craving more space. I'm craving just a different pace and I think this is really going to help.

Simone: Yeah, I love that you just told me your story of where you are today. And like I said, each year you are making great money. Each year your sort of platform and your name was getting bigger and bigger, you were impacting more and more clients. And you wrote two books, right?

Michelle: I wrote one book that was traditionally published.

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Simone: Okay, whatever, you wrote two books. And yeah, you might have been tired when you were running five programs but also you were also having so much fun. And that's just so apparent when you interact with Michelle's business that it's just so much joy and fun infused in it which is why I chose her as my coach in the first place.

Michelle: Thank you. Yeah, it's my creative outlet in a lot of ways, sometimes for better or for worse. I was a performer and then I became a business owner and in so many ways it's fractious that creative itch, so much.

Simone: I cannot agree more. I feel like, I'm not a performer in that way, but I consider myself I'm a writer. I'm a creative writer. And my business is how I write. And everybody has a thing. Your thing doesn't have to be writing or acting, but use your business as your creative outlet, 100%. So anyway I was thinking, something that I really want to teach my clients is how to scale while not running yourself down to the ground. Because my experience of scaling to a million over this past year was so – I don't want to say it easy but it was kind of easy.

Michelle: Say it. Say it. Say it loud [**crosstalk**].

Simone: Not because I didn't work incredibly hard, not because I didn't take a lot of risks and have a lot of emotional drama, and have a lot of [inaudible]. All of that check, check, check, but at no point did I feel overwhelmed. And it was very – and I think it's because I kept everything so simple. I just had one offer at a time. I focused on building demand for that one offer. And I look back and I'm like, "That was brilliant, everybody should do that."

Michelle: It's totally true, it's totally. And I talk to my clients about following the ease-y – I just call it e.a.s.e-y. Because I'm like, you know, just kind of how you described it, that it's not like this is so easy, I could do it in my sleep. Or this causes me no angst. But just like when I'm doing this thing, or I'm looking at this thing, or I'm working on this thing there is a sense of

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ease, there is a sense of connection. There is a sense of flow for the most part, [inaudible] all the time.

And we've been programmed to be like no, no, no, we have to pay our dues, we have to climb the mountain, we have to hustle, hustle, hustle.

Simone: We need to create a morning routine and do it and do an hour of yoga every day at the same time.

Michelle: Yes, and fight the patriarchy and eat my green smoothies and yes all those things, yes. And I feel like it's a trek. And no one trusts it. That's a trick. And again, is a trick. It's like the best trick, that if something feels easy you follow it and do more of it.

Simone: Do you think that's why you might have resisted it for yourself for so long?

Michelle: For sure. For sure.

Simone: Okay, tell me more.

Michelle: And also, I mean I'll say now, not to get into the therapy territory but I was a very like overscheduled kid and I'm someone who's just very used to be being busy. And I'm a super extrovert. So when you hear that advice to like nothing should be a yes unless it's a hell yes. I want a hell yes to everything. I want a hell yes, every conversation I want a hell yes, every happy hour I want a hell yes.

Simone: We're not multi passionate, we're omni passionate.

Michelle: Yes, I love that. And that's not to say that – I do need my downtime. I do need my pajama days. I do need my alone time. I need my Netflix time, sure. But I think that for me I do best when things are busy. And that's just my kind of default, I would say too my default setting is over-complicator, which is funny, because I'm – that's for me. But for my clients I'm able to simplify things. It's so weird.

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Simone: I think that's like the vast majority of us I think, don't you think?

Michelle: It's so weird. So every single person that I hire as a freelancer who I bring on for my team I will tell them that. And I'll say, "Just so you know, I never want to overcomplicate. I want you every single time to say, "Michelle, I'm stopping you because you're overcomplicating. And here's how we can make things easy.'" And I go, "Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

Simone: I love that you're talking about this because you're modeling that it's okay, you can be a star coach and make multiple six figures and be in your 12<sup>th</sup> year of business and still be working on not overcomplicating everything. You're still a human.

Michelle: Oh my gosh, for sure. And letting go of the reins a bit, this is going to be like a bit – I mean this new iteration of my business is going to be such a test. And I'm not a micromanager. Any time I bring on a VA or something I'm like, "I do not want to have to triple check your work. I do not, I just want to hand things off to you and it magically happens and I can trust it. And don't make me do that." But there are certain things that I go...

I just hired an Instagram manager for my new Instagram account and she writes the posts and I'll be like, "Can you put this comma here? Can you put this thing here?" And I just have sometimes said to myself, just let her job and who cares if the comma's there. That's going to be a good lesson that I'm going to work through.

Simone: I think when you let go of the small things and there's so many things that are the small things. And when you simplify your life and your offer in your business and you let it to be easy, and simple, and elegant, if you do that your life will be so much easier. And I think that you're putting yourself on the path to greater sustainable profitability. And I think the reason that actually so few people manage to be able to do it is because like you, I think so many people are – our normal is just go, go, go all the time.

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So that it's almost like how we learn to feel okay is if we're really busy and if there's always something happening. And when things kind of slow down and things are not as complicated it's almost like our nervous systems get on high alert. Something must be very wrong right now, you're in danger.

Michelle: Yes, we're more scared of the stillness and the silence than we are of the emergency that we have created. And I think going back to being like internet business dinosaurs, I think that what was shouted from the megaphone from back then was you need to diversify your income streams. And so you need...

Simone: Yeah, that was a whole thing back then wasn't it?

Michelle: So you need one-on-one coaching and a group program. And you need a membership site. And then you need [**crosstalk**].

Simone: And a product, yeah.

Michelle: Yeah, and then you need a product. You need all these things because you need to diversify your income streams. And so I still think that there – and I haven't thought about this till right this second, I was like, yeah, I think it's still stuck in there somewhere of building that diversity within your business. And that funnel, like my smart business coach, just like, "Well, I need a place for the discoverers. And then when the discoverers are done, I need to bring them to the launch. And then when the launchers are done, I need to build them to the building. And then I'm okay letting them go to someone else."

I could create something beyond that first building mastermind, whatever. But that's been drilled down of that's your funnel and that's how you hold on to your clients.

Simone: And I think in so many ways that worked.

Michelle: Yeah, it did. It did.

Simone: In many ways it's a great thing to do.

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Michelle: It did and it does. Yes, but it takes a long time to get there. And I think that it could be very overwhelming and harder to market, way harder to market.

Simone: Yeah, because you're marketing five different things and you're dividing your brain power.

Michelle: Yeah. And I think it's whiplash too, I mean anyone that goes to my Instagram account now, it's like am I talking about Discovering? Am I talking about Building? Am I talking about Launching? Is this right? Why am I following her? I'm not, you know, I don't have a business, why is she talking about building your business? So I love the clarity, that's going to be like go to 90 Day Business Launch on Instagram, I'm just launching a business.

Simone: What would your advice be to somebody who wants to have a whole bunch of different offers and thinks it's really fun? And kind of like is sort of torn within where one part of us is like, you know what? Constraining it down to fewer simpler offers, I can see the merit of it but then I don't want to let go of all the fun, all the things that I can do.

Michelle: Yeah, totally. And I don't, you know, I work exclusively with highly creative multi passionate women. So I don't want to throw the handcuffs on anyone and be like – I would not say, "Everyone needs just one offer." But what I will say is, "You can do everything, just not at the same time." I would tell that business owner, "Start at what feels easiest to you, e.a.s.y, easiest to you." And really like you talk about, show up for that program for those clients. Really see how it works.

That's why I tell my 90 Day business launchers, "Listen, if you want to go rogue you can. But I will tell you over, and over, and over again, you start your business with one-on-one clients." Because that is where you are getting the most experience, you're getting the most up close look at how someone is doing.



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Simone: You can't skip it. Hold on, just pause that. Listen everybody, this is so important. Please do not try to skip the part where you do a lot of one-on-one coaching. Everything that Michelle just said, I just want to tattoo it to every surface. It's not something annoying that you like – it's not like less fun, less [inaudible]. This is where you build your muscle as a coach. If you want to be great at selling group programs and memberships, whatever, how the hell are you going to know exactly how to speak to the people who need it, exactly how to solve their problems?

And actually solve the problems of – because let's say you're a subject matter expert in one area of life coaching. Are you confident that you can help anybody who comes in the door who wants help with their problem, any kind of human being with any kind of life thing? How are you going to develop that rock solid expertise and confidence? You can't fake it, you have to earn it. And how you earn it is through one-on-one coaching. It's so important, yeah.

Michelle: I'm going to add to that too. And what would even do one better is if you do those one-on-one coaching clients and sessions and you take a buck ton of notes. And for every call you do a download, you do a download of like – and this is why I started off as a career coach for creatives because it was like not only was I able to really solidify my process. Really know what I'm putting out there that works for people. Really know their trajectory. Once you work with a half dozen, dozen clients you know in session four kind of usually what you're walking into.

You know session eight they're freaking about x, y, z. And then go to – or put that into a group program. Then you're going to knock it out of the park because your clients are going to be freaking out about something. "I know that you're freaking about", and they'll go, "How did you know that?" Well, it's because you've done this work. But I always use this Fenn diagram of like you need to also do this work and figure out. What's the overlap between the work you love doing, who you love doing it for, how you want to show up, and what those people want?

Simone: Want to pay lots of money for it.

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Michelle: Yeah. And so if you are a general life coach and you can get people in the door, I find it's really hard for general life coaches to get clients. But if you're a general life coach and you're like, "I'm a brand new life coach. I just want to work with anyone on anything. If you're stuck and you need someone to help you get to a different place, I'm here."

Simone: And I have one idea about you.

Michelle: Yes please.

Simone: I have a theory that there is no such thing as a general life coach because if you are going to be successful as a general life coach, even if you help all the people, you have to come at it with a very specific lens. Very specific personality and your own methodology, this is my thing, and with this [**crosstalk**] of my unique thing I help all the people with all the things. There has to be something unmistakable about you.

Michelle: Sign that. I mean it's the branding piece, it's your story, it's, you know, and I think there has to be some sort of commonality with who you work with. Even if that's the commonality, who you were, the one thing that kept coming up for every single one of those clients that you know, you nail, and you head out of the park and you love working with them on. Then that's the thing.

Simone: Yeah, 100%, the willingness to put in the work. The willingness to experiment, that's so, so important. And I think people just like to admire me for just selling out all my launches and being such an amazing coach and having all the answers to everything. I'm like, "How do you think I got here?" I didn't like – something didn't fall from the fucking sky. I coached a bazillion people, a bazillion hours a week one-on-one for years. And I have earned, somebody starts talking for 10 seconds and I know exactly how to coach them. I can see through them.

I mean I want everybody to have this. And I know you know what I'm talking about, right?

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Michelle: Yes, yes, yes.

Simone: Yeah, you know your client inside and out, that doesn't mean does that make you an effective coach; it makes you so much good at marketing and selling. So please enjoy the work of putting in the one-on-one coaching hours. It will pay you back so [**crosstalk**].

Michelle: Yes. I say my equation that I made up is time, plus experience, equals trust plus confidence and that's it.

Simone: Hold on. I want to add something, time plus experience did you say?

Michelle: Hmm.

Simone: Plus evaluation and learning.

Michelle: Yes, thank you. Thank you, yes.

Simone: Because you said we have to take notes. I call that evaluation, but you don't just keep doing the same thing without an active critical thinking curiosity about okay, what worked here? What didn't work here? How would I do it differently next time? And that's what allows you to get better with each iteration, instead of doing the same thing every time.

Michelle: Yes, I'm updating my equation and I won't give you [inaudible].

Simone: Yeah, but I like your equation, it's working.

Michelle: Because that's exactly right. No, but that's exactly right. And I tell my clients. And then it's hard, they look at successful coaches like us and say, "Oh my God, I want to get there. And I'm behind", and whatever. And it's like we are 10 years in. You know what I mean? You need to start walking the path of time and experience. And I talk about it with my 90 Day Business launchers, "Day 70, day 80, day 89." And literally when we are recording this, it's the night before my big group is launching.

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And they're coming into the 90 network group. And they're like, "But I don't feel confident. And I don't feel like – oh my God, is this going to fail? I'm thinking about the other business I do that I have."

And I say to them, "I would be worried if you were confident. I would be worried if you weren't thinking about failing right now. And the only thing that you could do is just keep going. You've taken these 90 days. This is the first part of the time plus experience. You've proven that you commit. You've proven that you show up. You've proven that you could follow the directions, make it happen. You have your marching orders. You've proven this over, and over, and over again for 90 days. Now you get to keep going and gain the experience."

Simone: Yes, I completely agree. I'm going to float another idea. But I have this idea, this theory that life coaches who want all of the confidence and the competence from day one and they are not willing to put in years of experimentation and learning. And putting in the one-on-one work to really make it and be successful are actually doing this because their subconscious is subtly disrespecting their own profession.

Michelle: That's super interesting.

Simone: If I want to be a doctor I don't expect to become a doctor in a day, or even a year, or even three years. I'm like okay; I've got to take all these classes in college. I've got to take this really hard test. I've got to get into medical school, studying so hard in medical school for four years. I'll have no social life. And then I go to residency and then I get paid nothing and I work like a slave for three years, or two years, or whatever it is. And then maybe after that I start work.

So doctors have great pride in their profession. Their profession is very prestigious and so they're like, "Yeah, I go into hundreds and thousands dollars of debt and I put in years, and years, and years, being poor and working my butt off and having a miserable life to become a doctor. Of course it's worth it, it's what we do." But I think inside us, life coaches so many of us don't take our own profession as seriously. We think it's like, we

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almost think it's like a hobby. And we don't think what we do is as important, or as prestigious, or as substantive as what a doctor does.

So we get impatient with the journey, whereas if we respected our own profession as much as doctors do then we would be willing to go for the long haul to run the marathon, to give it whatever it takes. And not whine about investing and not whine about not everything being handed to them on a platter on month two.

Michelle: Right, yes, I cosign that entirely. And I don't want to put blame on the certification schools but I do in a way because I think what's sorely lacking is business help. And I remember being in my certification program for two years back from 2007 to 2009, and they had business building classes that were required, you had to take ten of them. And they were in open community format and every single week I would lose my mind, Simone, you can imagine, made like a ton....

Simone: Was it kind of like, "You'll figure it out as you go?"

Michelle: Oh my God, no, it was literally – and because it was a Q&A format there was just every single week I would sign in to write it down on my log so I could get credit. And I would work on something else while half listening, it was one person that's like, "Where do I order business cards." And so I'm asking, "What do I have on my website", every single week. And I'm like what is going on?

Simone: I love that I'm getting selfie Michelle. Selfie Michelle is the best.

Michelle: But this is why I'm still frustrated and mad about it, we have a current client that is back at my school getting her certification. And I was like, "Tell me about the business building course?" And then she's like, "No, there aren't." I was like, "There aren't at all?" She's like, "No." I said, "Tell me about being taught how to do group coaching, one-on-one stuff." She's like, "No." "They're not teaching coaches how to do group coaching?" "No, that's not what I'm doing." What are we even talking about?

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So I feel like it's related too back to my acting days where you could be trained to be the best actor in the whole entire world. But if you don't know how to market yourself, and sell yourself, and treat yourself as a business in a way then you probably aren't going to get anywhere because you'll be sitting in your room.

Simone: And to be, you know, to play devil's advocate you can only teach so much in a six month, or eight month, or a year, whatever curriculum, right?

Michelle: Yes.

Simone: And so to think you can go into a certification program thinking this is going to set me up. I'm going to have everything I need. And on the one that's true in the sense of there is sufficiency, you believe in what you have and you get resourceful with it. And on the other hand no, that's like year one of medical school, you're not ready yet. You need to figure it out.

Michelle: Right, but at least at medical school there is that funnel into residency, into okay, you're going to get what you need. So by the time you're out, and I wish what the coaching schools did and this is what I'm hoping to start doing with 90 Day Business Launch is to approach those schools and say, "Hi, I know you've given no business building help." And therefore coaches who...

Simone: Aren't making money.

Michelle: Aren't making any money, most of them are failing. They can't see their clients...

Simone: And they think it's their fault.

Michelle: A million percent, you need a flow, you need a greet. You are here. This client is spending \$8,000. You are getting all the skills. You're getting every tool in your toolbox. We are going to teach you how to be a kickass coach. You're going to be ready. But if you want to learn how to be a business owner then here is where you need to go. We will filter you to

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this pool; we'll filter you to Michelle. We'll filter you to Simone. Go for it. And they don't do that. I think that they wind up a lot of the times promising you're getting the whole package.

Simone: And they're not.

Michelle: And these coaches leave and they're like...

Simone: I think that even so much worse than that is the shame that coaches feel that they weren't able to figure it all out by themselves without investing more. This thought is so toxic, it creates so much shame. I should have been able to figure it out on my own. I shouldn't need to invest again. Again, just like I just take you back to the medical school analogy. Of course you should invest. You're investing for a lifetime of a career, that's going to make you money for a lifetime, for expertise for a lifetime. Of course you want to invest year after year and don't scrimp.

Nobody would say, "Well, I'm too cheap to go to medical school", if you really want to be a doctor.

Michelle: Well, and it's the – it's coupled with the message from society and the world that is still so prevalent even in 2020, 2021, that being a business owner is not stable, it is not stable.

Simone: It's such a lie.

Michelle: It's such a lie, I would super [**crosstalk**].

Simone: Yeah. And then running a business is so hard and painful. I mean it is but just because life is.

Michelle: Well, and you know what? I like to say I'm not the type of business coach that's like, "Clients, and glitter, and rainbows, and [inaudible] and everything is amazing all the time." I'm like, "No, what stress do you prefer." Your career is stressful no matter what." There is stress that comes from being an employee where you have to abide by someone



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else's rules, and time clock, and salary, and everything else, but yeah, you get...

Simone: And counting your vacation days.

Michelle: Counting your vacation days but yeah, you get benefits. And you get a determined amount of money every two weeks in your bank account. Great. Or would you rather be authentic 24/7, work on things that you care about, call the shots, take vacation when you want, only answer to yourself or work with people who you choose? But have the stress of having to find your next check. And so that's always what I say to my clients, "That's it, as to whether should I be an entrepreneur."

Simone: And it gets easier.

Michelle: I think that we think it's easier because that's our fucking distress bubble.

Simone: It gets easier.

Michelle: Yes, it gets easier but the beginning work is like – I tell my 90 Day Business launchers, "Hi, you're in learning curve city right now and you will not leave learning curve city for at least a year. Every single thing you do as a business owner for your first year from pre launch until yay, one year. Every single thing you do is going to be a learning curve."

Simone: That's a very nice way of saying it's going to feel like balls.

Michelle: Yeah, it's going to feel like balls. It's balls city. I might use that instead. But it's also hard because we're grown-ups. So there's so many of us are so settled in the careers we've already chosen and being respected in those fields. Or being – I work with stay-at-home-moms sometimes and just this is my world, this is how I'm seen.

There's this huge identity shift, we're 30 years old, we're 40 years old, we're 50 years old. Do we want everything to be a learning curve and it

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feels so hard? We have to adjust like crazy to that and you really just have to say, “Okay, I surrender, I’m coming along for the ride and [**crosstalk**].

Simone: And you can make that more normal. We think there’s so much shame of I am the only one who’s floundering, lost, and if I were more, whatever, disciplined, more hardworking, smarter, whatever, then it wouldn’t feel so bad. I wouldn’t be in such a steep learning curve. But no, we need to make that normal, you are building – that’s how you build your entrepreneur muscle. Yeah.

And I just want everybody to know that before I became an entrepreneur, if somebody asked me, “Are you a self-starter? Because you need to be a self-starter to own a business.” I would have been like, “I don’t think I am.”

Michelle: A risk taker, you need a high, like you need to love risk.

Simone: Yeah, there’s like some kind of personality trait that you need to have. The thing is I went into it, I would say without any of those traits. I didn’t know how to be a self-starter. I was the biggest procrastinator and I didn’t know how to take risks. But I built my risk tolerance. I built my self-starter muscle a teensy little bit at a time. It’s like somebody goes to the gym for the first time in their lives and just starts by walking three minutes at the treadmill. That’s how I started and that’s where you can start.

And what kept me going was not being great at it, but because there’s this thing in my heart where this is my passion. And I love the work so much and I love the people that I work with so much. And please, if you have that love and that passion, please be willing to be that person at the gym who’s starting with a three minute walk on the treadmill.

Michelle: Thank you. I love that.

Simone: You don’t need the entrepreneurial personality, fuck that.

Michelle: My God, not at all, yeah. And I use the workout analogy all the time with like getting started and especially since I’m working with these pre business owners where, “How do I do that? How do I just, how do I sit

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down? How do I make the time?” I’m like, “It’s like when you go to the gym, what do they say, “The hardest part is actually getting dressed and getting out the door.””

Simone: Yeah, putting on the shoes, yeah.

Michelle: Right, getting dressed for your run and getting out of the door. And I said, “I promise if you make that bet with yourself, that like okay, all I need to do today is put on my running shoes and walk out the door. And once I walk out the door I have full permission to walk back in the house and take the running shoes off and not – like nine times out of ten you will go for your run. And nine times out of ten after you get through the first really hard five minutes you’re going to go, “Okay, I’m really glad I did that.””

Simone: Yes, that’s how to get through every stage.

Michelle: Yes, and 13 years in, yeah.

Simone: We’re going to keep saying that until we die so we normalize.

Michelle: Totally. Totally. Totally.

Simone: Michelle, this was the most fabulous – it’s very cathartic for me, I don’t know about for you.

Michelle: I can’t believe it, it was forever ago I remember coaching you on our very first...

Simone: Tell everybody what I said to you when I first came to you.

Michelle: Okay, can I tell you? Can I tell everyone? It’s funny. Before you officially signed up, and I should have looked this up beforehand, but I will never forget it. We had an email exchange, maybe you were on my list for a little while because I was still a baby business owner. It can’t have been that long. And you were just like, “Michelle, I think I’m going to be your one

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exception. I think that there is no hope for me.” When you tell someone who just – there’s no hope for them.

Simone: Did I say, “There’s no”, it’s so dramatic.

Michelle: It was something like that. I need to look it up.

Simone: I’m sure.

Michelle: So you can put it in your show notes or something, it was that dramatic, it was just like, “I’m really convinced that I’m your one exception and I’m [**crosstalk**].”

Simone: She had a bunch of really positive testimonials on her website.

Michelle: Yeah. “I feel like that’s not going to be me.”

Simone: And I was like, “I totally believe that you are amazing and all your clients get their amazing results except for me because I am broken.”

Michelle: Yes. And I forgot what I said to you at the time, but you’re right and that I saw superstar Simone and I was just like, I don’t know what this woman’s talking about. She’s a rock star and incredible.

Simone: You set me straight.

Michelle: I won’t agree to work with someone who I don’t see that with. And whenever I get that question I say, “No pressure, but anyone who asks me that question winds up doing amazing things and being super successful.” So just like, I’m just going to put that there. But if that’s the question you’re asking this is going to be [**crosstalk**].

Simone: Yeah. You’re thinking, I am the one that’s broken. I’m the one who can’t do it, like with me.

Michelle: I’m the one, I’m going to be the one, but the difference is that you still showed up. You joined the group, you invested. You showed up. I remember your voice, I remember you were like – I have this image of me

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on my coaching chair in my house, this is where I did my sessions over the phone before Zoom and the internet, we didn't even see each other. We just were on a conference call line. And I think you would like leave your day job and you would be walking around New York City and I'd be in my apartment in Brooklyn looking at the skyline.

And I have the image of you talking while you just left work and you were walking around. And you showed the fuck up every time. And I think that's why – that's as simple as every success story starts. It's just I'm committing to that sliver of belief that I can do this. And that this is my time and that I could be successful. And if you just keep showing up for that version of yourself then you're going to be good.

Simone: I'm so grateful to 24 year old Simone. She was amazing for getting coached and showing up when it was so scary. She had no idea what was ahead of her. She had no idea how hard things were going to be. And she had no idea how strong she was going to turn out to be. And she had no idea what she was capable of. But then you know what everybody, find that person; find that coach who whispers it to you, right?

Michelle: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Simone: Okay. Michelle, how do people find you?

Michelle: Thank you. [90daybusinesslaunch.com](http://90daybusinesslaunch.com), you could hit the Instagram button or you could just find me at [90daybizlaunch](https://www.instagram.com/90daybizlaunch) with a b.i.z. on Instagram, that's the only place I hang out.

Simone: Michelle, this is part one of many conversations [**crosstalk**].

Michelle: Please. I need time on the podcast, off the podcast, I'm just like fuck man, you're amazing. I love you. FYI I listened to your Q&A podcast today and I'm already talking about it with my clients. And I'm just like, "I'm dropping the link everyone, and everybody [**crosstalk**]." Everyone has to listen to what you have say. You're just so real, and so truthful, and so extraordinary and I love it, I do.

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Simone: Thank you so much. Thank you so much for being my first coach. Thank you so much for being here today. And I will talk to you later.

Michelle: Yay.

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