

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Full Episode Transcript



With Your Host

Simone Grace Seol

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Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Welcome to *Joyful Marketing*. I'm 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.

Well, well, well my friends, you're in for a treat today. I have on the show my mastermind client, Serena Hicks, who closed close to \$300,000 in just six months of my mastermind. And get this, she accomplished this after having had to ask to borrow her boyfriend's credit in order to pay for the mastermind.

We have an incredible conversation since she's such a fun person and a storyteller. And she's going to tell us all about how she went from, in her own words, being hella broke at age 40 to being on track to make close to a million dollars in less than a year.

She's going to talk about the mindset that kept her perpetually broke even when she had a great career and a great resume. And the shift that happened in her life that made her radically change course. And you're really going to get the play by play of how she had a year with four months of zero revenue. Zero income and ended up making \$200,000 and half of it just in December.

Yeah, that's what I said, half of \$200,000 just in December. You want to get some popcorn or your favorite tea or go on a walk, hunker down and really enjoy this conversation. I actually started recording right in the middle of myself talking to her so you can feel like you're jumping right into it too. Enjoy and learn.

Simone: Just like what is happening? Because just all I see is like glitter and sparks coming from your direction and I'm like, "What is happening there?"

Serena: There is a lot happening. I feel like I'm fundamentally happy. Like my biggest issue, which is a real non-issue, but it's an issue is like

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

acclimating and allowing myself to be here. Like I've hired even more coaches because I've never been in love. I've never trusted someone to be a steward of my heart. And as we've started to like examine things, not just me with Matt but like me with my trauma coach, there's a reason I was alone for most of my adult life. And by that I mean, what is that saying where it's like, we strive for interdependence, anyone who's hyper independent -

Simone: Yep, it's like, [crosstalk].

Serena: It's like a question mark. Right, right, right, that's exactly it. And it's like there's a difference between independence and hyper independence. And I was hyper independent and like to let someone love me and then like Matt got laid off in October of 2019. So going into the pandemic, and he got like a huge severance.

So like he's fine financially and stuff. But like when we got together, I was hella broke, hella broke. And now he's like, "Yeah man, my girl is going to make a million dollars." And that's a really rapid 180-degree turnaround in a short period of time.

So it's like I love him endlessly, but like more importantly me allowing, like almost trusting is actually the word I want to say, like that someone else could love me, not just when like I was broke because my head had thoughts when I started to make money that it's like, "Well, it's easy to love a girl when she's like, you know, oh man, thanks for buying me dinner."

Simone: Damsel in distress.

Serena: Right, that's exactly it. Like will he still love me when I'm like, "Don't tell me how to run my business babe." But the answer is yes. And we talk about stuff and so then it's also just really exciting. Because like we met a long time ago, but like we got together and I woke up and decided I was tired of being desperately broke forever at 40.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

So it's also like this really luscious moment in life to be like, "Man, I waited my whole life for this season." But I like give myself permission to do things and say the things and I feel really free. Because I don't have an employer, I can just do whatever and say whatever is actually true for me and changing the world as a coach. And it's like, "Holy fuck, I worked hard to get here." But it's also like, "Oh, my God, am I allowed to be happy, really?" And the answer is yes.

Simone: I just want to like put my hand on my heart and just, like it's so amazing to be witness to this moment where you created all the things and here you are, and it's all of the feelings.

Serena: Are we going to cry before we start? Because I'm here for it. I'm totally like, [crosstalk].

Simone: I kind of like where we started, I think we'll just start with this breakdown.

Serena: Yeah, but I also love it because that was part of the gift that you gave me. Like I sort of watched your glow up. Not sort of, I did. I remember like being in 2k. And like, Melanie Childers is the reason I got in 2K. And then I remember watching your meteoric rise, which ultimately gave me permission.

I mean, I know that wasn't like, you know, a very intentional thing. You weren't messaging me being like, "I'm growing, Serena, you can too." But like it's hard to be what we don't see. And so when I saw someone doing what felt, "Holy shit, that's possible?" And like, even before you, because I found you in the 2k Stacey community, I found Stacey and Brooke Castillo's Life Coach School podcast.

And I found it when I was hella broke, and was just desperately trying to find, you know, evidence that like, because I feel like, what is it? Not common sense, but like our culture tells us that like whatever you've done in your past, your history is an indicator of your future success. And so it

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

was really fun to be like, “Fuck that noise. Just because I've stayed in struggle forever doesn't mean that's what I have to do for the next 40 years. That just means I was collecting tools and resources and information, which I will now put to work.”

Simone: I think there's so much to be said about how we think we have to do all these things to help our clients create transformations. But, I mean, you always reflect back to me that like you just seeing me do my thing was the transformation for you.

And I know for a fact that it's the same for your clients. They just watch you glow, and they're like, “Look at Serena doing her thing. Oh my gosh.” And it's not explicit. It's not said, but it's like a conversation between our unconscious minds, right? It's like, “Hey, whatever you see me doing, like you can do it too. And you can do it.” You know, we can all glow in our own ways.

And so I think that's at least part, like at least half of our jobs as coaches is to just really show up for the lives that we want. And like don't even worry about the clients, they'll just transform on their own.

Serena: Yeah, I feel the need to tell you for sure my clients are crystal clear that if I can do it, they can too. As in they're like, “Oh, you are so not perfect.” I'm like, “Uh, no. I don't email my lists like a certain number of times a week. I don't always exactly make it on exactly the right, sometimes I'm three minutes late.” Which my brain wants to pretend is a real problem.

But just like you said, it's like no man, I can show up as I am, which is very human. And they can still get mind blowing transformations. And we're all better.

Simone: Yeah, and what I love about you and your brand and everything is that it's so, you know, you never pretend to be perfect. And you're not like this predictable, polished bot. And you're at the same time you're so vivid.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Like your voice is so uniquely you, and there's no mistaking your voice for somebody else's.

And I know that, I wanted to interview you today about this. Like how to cultivate that quality of being where when you show up, and it's so distinctive that nobody can mistake you for anybody else. And it's so magnetic and just being in your presence creates transformations for other people.

Because when you have all of that going on, that effortlessly magnetizes people to want to come and pay you to work with you. But that's almost like you're not like trying to do it, it just happens, right? And I know that that's a big part of your success, if not all of it. Like you just became a version of yourself where you're glowing so much that the clients couldn't keep away, and all this like money and influence couldn't keep away.

So tell me about that. I'm such a student of that process, as well as somebody who tries to live it on our own. So how did that happen? So you came into my, I mean, you started your transformation, you know, way before you came into my mastermind. But just to put things a little bit in perspective tell us, like I know you told me you had to borrow your boyfriend's credit to pay for my mastermind. So tell us a little bit about where you started.

Serena: Okay, I think the real story for me started with my big brother passed away in November of 2018. And I had just been like pushed out of a job. And so then I was grieving because he was 47, he died from cancer. And so I think it was my, what's the word? It starts with an R. It was my reckoning. It was like this moment that I realized like this is not a drill.

And like, I'd sort of been notoriously fucking, around having fun. I was his little sisters so if I ever got into like real trouble financially he'd help. And then I realized like we're not actually guaranteed 90 healthy years on the planet. So like, what exactly am I doing here?

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

So that, I think, was like the real beginning. And then I also was broke, which was sort of my norm. And so I was like, “Hey, I’m actually really smart. And I have a good heart and I’m sort of perpetually broke and perpetually single.”

Simone: Which was interesting because you had such a successful professional life.

Serena: Yes. And so such a good illusion. So my first job was MTV News. Okay, they paid nothing. I mean, \$24,000 in New York City in 2000.

Simone: Yeah, that’s like homeless.

Serena: Exactly. I was going to say, it’s poverty. In case someone’s like, “Is that poverty level?” The answer is yeah.

Simone: Yeah, I think so.

Serena: And it was in 2000 as well. But when you work at MTV you get a lot of cool free shit. People invite you to their parties, there’s a lot of open bars, and even roommates are like, “Oh, I want you to live here and lower rent.” I swear to God.

Simone: That’s crazy.

Serena: It is crazy.

Simone: It’s like currency in New York, yeah.

Serena: It’s total currency. And it was problematic because so the way the job, and excuse me, to be clear, I had the best bosses in my entire MTV career. I only have love for them. But how it works is back then it was \$100 day rate. So there’s no overtime. So if you work, you know, 14 hours a day, six days in a row, that’s a \$600 week. Congratulations.

Simone: Oh my gosh.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: So I didn't realize it at the time because who would know. But like that was the beginning of my bad sort of money mindset because it was just you work hard, and also of course it's MTV News. So like there's 100 people in line behind me.

Simone: Yeah, you should feel lucky to be here.

Serena: Yes, take what you get and you're welcome. And so I did. And so I was hella broke and I started putting money on credit cards to do things like eat and exist in New York City on a poverty level income.

So then, like, fast forward to I had this amazing career but I never learned. Because even after I left MTV, because when you say MTV other TV shows will hire you, to actually negotiate for a fair rate, or what I was worth. I just took that like, "Sure, I'll take whatever they give me because I always get free shit because I work for cool people."

But it's this like I'll take what I can get mindset that landed me at 40 perpetually broke. So like, no, I was never homeless and I was never actually going to be.

Simone: Did you forget to mention the part where you won an Emmy?

Serena: Yeah, I did.

Simone: Okay, I just want to put that in there. It's like, "Yeah, she worked on TV, that's cool. But also she was like very successful and very good at her job."

Serena: Yes, I was a good producer. And it was a Daytime Emmy, so like my brain wants to be like, "That doesn't really count."

Simone: Normal people don't even know what the difference is.

Serena: It was when I worked, I won't name it. It was when I worked on another show, I was outside of MTV.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Simone: Why don't you want to name it?

Serena: Because I don't say nice things. I will tell you my favorite, I did product placement, basically like sponsorships.

Simone: I want to say it was something that she could name drop, and everybody be like, "Ooh." So let's like leave it there.

Serena: If you troll my internet, you'll figure it out. If you troll my internet like I talk too much. And thank God I was friends; the lawyers were the best people on the team. So like, it's fine, I'm fine. But like I had a successful career, even then. I wasn't highly paid because just like we said I always got trade and people were like, "Come get a free massage." At their professional environment, just so we're clear, that sounds so sexy.

So 40 is really when I woke up, I had enough evidence that like, "Hey, I have this great resume and I'm a smart person. How come I never have enough money? Or just enough money?" And, you know, losing Anthony and he was 47 and it was this real like, "Hey, what do I really want to do with my life? Because maybe I've only got another 10 years, or 20, or who knows."

So that was how I sort of fumbled into hiring a coach.

Simone: Was that Melanie?

Serena: No. So Melanie and I met at a coaching event that I was just happy to attend in Austin years prior, a Martha Beck event.

Simone: Oh cool.

Serena: Like in 2016 when I owned a pole dancing studio. Separate story, but not.

Simone: Oh my God, please write a book one day.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: I will. And just for anyone who's listening, part of me making money is directly linked to me teaching pole dancing, fact. So I'm like, wait, this is where I learn the art of authenticity as a form of seduction, as an actual authenticity.

So, yeah, I hired my first coach. We've talked about this in the mastermind before so I think it's important for your listeners. She was 5k for six weeks and I had exactly enough credit left on the entire globe to make my first payment.

So when people are talking about like my client said they couldn't afford me and I'm always like, "No, no, paying is a part of the transformation." It changed my life; I literally didn't know how I was going to pay rent in two weeks. And I did know that I wanted to work with this person that I trusted in her container. I was going to like start to figure out why I didn't charge fairly, blah, blah, blah.

So hired her, started working as a social media marketing consultant, because that played to my strengths. And that's how I crossed paths with Melanie. And then we ultimately ended up like hiring each other, being like, "Okay, you coach me, I'm going to coach you."

So she brought me into like the model and mindset coaching and blew my mind. And then I like to think I helped her with her socials at the time, even though she's just fantastic and all over it.

So that was how I fumbled into coaching. Melanie was the first person who was like, "Why don't you just coach?" And I was like, "I don't have a certification. I'm not really, like I'm not allowed." And she was like, "But you coached me and you have all of these skills. And what is this I need a certification? Like why would you wait?"

So shout out to Melanie Childers forever for being like, "Bitch, get it together."

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Simone: I kind of wish she was here so I could just like hug her.

Serena: I know, hugs.

Simone: Hey Melanie, we love you.

Serena: Hey Melanie, thanks for giving me permission to live my best, happiest life.

So yes, that was it. That was the tipping point. And that's also tied to like when you talk about, you know, when I'm telling people like when I was doing consults or I'm evangelical about coaching because it changed my whole fucking life. Paying money "I didn't have" for that first coach. And then when Melanie was like, "You can do this, you get to step into this evolution."

So then, by the time I signed up for your mastermind I had started making enough to usually pay rent on time, yay. And I moved in with Matt, my beloved. And so like I had the money, I just didn't actually have like the credit for the, you know, it was 9k to pay the balance on your mastermind at the time.

So yeah, I was like, and I got to coach myself. It was a personal growth moment because Matt's generous, but like he's not in coaching. So I remember being like, "Listen." And coached myself up and I was like, "I want you to have these credit card points, because you having these credit card points means I have these credit card points." Because we live together, so I'm like, "But if you don't want to, no problem. Like I'm just going to call my mom."

Like I was ready to, you know, if I needed to knock on the neighbor's door and explain the situation I was going to find a way to have someone pay the balance. Because of course you had the 24-hour window on your mastermind. And then, as I said, I actually had the money, it just hadn't hit my account yet so that was like no big deal.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

But it was also a big deal. Because sometimes I talk to people and I feel like they're like, "Oh, I didn't have the money so I couldn't." And I'm like, "Man, I'm sitting here talking to my boyfriend being like, bro, can I borrow \$9,000 in credit, because I've got 7000 that comes in in three more days. And I've got 1000 over here."

And I think part of my like, "Hey, no shame, let's get it done" is because I believe in coaching. And I saw your glow up and I believe in the work you do. So it was like a, of course, I'm going to figure out the money because as long as I can get in someone's mastermind, I knew I'm going to make way more money. I'm going to learn things. I'm going to have peer coaching. Like it just felt like the threshold, the doorway. Like all I got to do is get myself through this door and then it's going to be rad.

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: And that was true.

Simone: What happened after you got in the door?

Serena: So, first I relaxed and I was like, "I'm going to make so much money." And then, this was in August and I want everyone to know, because people who know my story about 2020 is that I ultimately made 197 and it was 87 all year, followed by 110 in December.

Simone: Hold on, slow down. Say that again slowly. What?

Serena: I talk fast, thank you. Sorry y'all.

Simone: It's like numbers don't compute anymore.

Serena: Okay, so my 2020, last year, and I joined your mastermind, I paid in August, joined in October. But I ultimately made 200,000. Ultimately, it was 197k over the year, but it breaks down to 87k in the first 11 months, followed by 110k in December.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Simone: That's bonkers.

Serena: Right, because of the mastermind and the work, all of that. But like okay, that's the part of the story that I like because there's four months that I made \$0 and not for lack of trying. And so I signed up for your mastermind in August. And I was like, "I'm going to be rich by the end of August, I'm just sure." I made no money in August. Zero.

Simone: Hold on, I just want to reiterate because Serena talks fast.

Serena: Yeah, I talk fast.

Simone: Serena made 200k last year. And the entire year there were four months of zero revenue.

Serena: Not for lack of trying. Got to stress that because that's real.

Simone: Yes.

Serena: Not on vacation, not taking it easy.

Simone: And half of that 200k, about 100k whatever it was -

Serena: 110.

Simone: 110, she made in December.

Serena: One month.

Simone: So whoever, like whenever you're listening to this, whatever you think about the rest of the year as like a foregone conclusion, wake up.

Serena: Yes.

Simone: Okay, continue please.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: Thank you. This is the moment where I need to remind all of your listeners people love to buy coaching for themselves in December.

Simone: New year, new you.

Serena: New year, new you. This is true every month but like in my body I spend money every December no matter what. So like, it was easy for me to really use that belief. But it's also like it's just a thought, you can believe that every month.

Simone: Yeah, yeah. Love it.

Serena: So yeah, I signed up. I made \$0 that August, not for lack of trying, not for lack of consults.

Simone: Right:

Serena: Just couldn't, excuse me, couldn't is not the right word, but like didn't convert. And I was at 10k then.

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: So I had all this mind drama. Mind drama. So then when I joined your mastermind, and I think in our first few weeks, I don't remember the exact words but basically you were like, how do you make this beyond no-brainer? So I was like, "I'm dropping my price back to five. Like that's happening? Because then it's just no-brainer, no-brainer to me."

Simone: You're dropping the what?

Serena: The price.

Simone: Oh, okay.

Serena: I went from, I had been at 10 but I hadn't sold for two months. So instead of working on my belief, when we started your mastermind in October and you were like, "Make it no-brainer." I decided I'm just going to

[Joyful Marketing](#) with Simone Grace Seol

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

change the C and that's how I'm going to get like back in this game. And that's what I did. So I sold some packages at five.

Simone: By the way, I won't often recommend that you drop your price, but basically the best price point at which to sell anything, including your coaching, is when you are just, like to the bones you are convinced that it's truly a no-brainer at this price.

So if you feel a little bit iffy about it, and you feel like at a slightly lower price you wouldn't feel resentful, like if there's like resentment coming up it's too low. But if you pick a number and it feels like, "Oh, at that price oh my gosh, the value for that is like outrageous. You'd be crazy, like you would have to be insane, so confused not to want to buy at this price." Like that is a price you want to sell at always.

And if that's a little lower than what you're charging now, listen, lower your price and make more money because you're going to sell more when that's what's happening, right? It's a resonance thing. So it's a no-brainer resonance when you feel like somebody would have to be crazy not to take it up at that price.

Anyway, little soapbox on that, please go on.

Serena: I appreciate that soapbox because it changed my life. It's just what you said, I was like, "But 5k is beyond no-brainer." And so then I started selling coaching again, as in people converted on consults. Also, not everyone, fun fact. And then based on our mastermind, so I like dove into peer coaching. And you've done another podcast episode and you actually shared with us. And I'm like, "Yeah, it's brilliant." I received, I think, peer coaching from 90, if not 95% of the mastermind.

Simone: Oh wow.

Serena: Like I made efforts, because when I joined your mastermind I only had four.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Simone: There's 28 of us so, that's a lot of people. Yeah.

Serena: Yeah, I had only had four clients when I joined your mastermind, like when it started in October. So I was like, "I got time, better get to coaching." And so I made an effort to learn when I was being coached. Obviously, number one, getting coaching is always a good idea. But also like taking like, "Ooh, I like how they do this, I want to do that."

And then if there was something that I didn't love, it was like, "Well, can I use that information to, you know, ramp up my coaching or whatever?" Like I just used every inch of my peer group, and access to you, and the information that you gave us in our awesome printed booklet.

But then I should also mention a pivotal, like right before I started to make big, big money, or big happy money if you will. I had this moment where I woke up and I caught my thought, "I'm behind in mastermind, I've really got to catch up in the workbook." And I realized, okay, this thought mostly just has me feeling like I'm in lack, or I'm otherwise inadequate. Which is not at all the same as feeling like, "Yeah, but I know enough to help somebody today."

And so I decided to move the workbook off my desk, and that I was not allowed to touch the workbook until I sold some coaching.

Simone: That's so powerful because people think the workbook is what will create the results. Or if it's not the workbook you buy a program, it's like, "Oh, all these modules. I have to study all these modules. I have to do all the worksheets." But no, you can just change your thought just like that.

Serena: Yeah.

Simone: You can decide to feel into a different, better emotion. That's enough. And that's actually the place, like if you do decide to do something in the worksheet like that's when you can really benefit from it.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: And I was a million miles away from that. That's what I ultimately realized, "Oh, I'm pretending that the magic is in Simone's workbook. But like I've been surrounded by magic, I've been getting coaching and I've been doing consulting. Like I already know enough."

Simone: And I am the magic.

Serena: Right. So it was like, "Okay, so what if I just give myself full permission to just show up as I am?" Because this actually ties into the first career at MTV News, like hanging out with all these larger, not hanging out by the way, working with larger than life like celebrities. But it's like why are we attracted to celebrities? It's like they're unapologetically their self.

And so I think that a couple of years of realizing the people I most feel connected to, and cheer for, and learn from, are doing the best they can with being their actual authentic self. So it's like a little, you know, sort of available to my brain that like, yeah, but when I'm hiding behind perfectionism, or when I'm hiding behind, my client Haley Thomas calls it the armor of excellence. But especially I think many, many BIPOC listeners understand, like we were all told we need to be twice as good and, you know, like must be in the armor of excellence.

So it's like, what happens when we take it off? And it's like, oh, well we're actually available for connection. And then also my brain can focus more on actually being of service instead of worrying about all the ways I'm probably doing it wrong.

Simone: That's so good. I have to take a pause and take that in. Yeah. So where a lot of people have trouble is that they have a hard time trusting, right, that when they take, what did you call it? The armor of excellence?

Serena: Yeah, that is a term my client turned me on to, Haley Thomas.

Simone: Okay.

Serena: The armor of excellence.

[Joyful Marketing](#) with Simone Grace Seol

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Simone: That's brilliant.

Serena: You've got to put it on and got to be excellent.

Simone: When you take it off, like what it feels like isn't like this beautiful, charming, like authentic, you know, branded vulnerable. You just feel like, "Okay, I am a gargoyle and now everybody can see it." Right?

Serena: Mm-hmm.

Simone: So how did you find your center there? How did you find like the enoughness of your being, of your presence that - You're giggling, why are you giggling?

Serena: I'm laughing because you're like, "How did you find your center?" I'm like, "I didn't."

Simone: Okay, love it.

Serena: That sounds so elegant, like a dancer, "I found my center." I'm like, "No, it was more like fumbling forward." Like when you see a two-year-old crying while they fumble and walk forward, that's how it felt. You specifically, in mastermind, you went on a little tear in the best way. And it was like, "Do you!" was effectively your messaging and be the CEO of your business. And she said it just like that everybody, "Do you!"

Simone: I have no memory of this.

Serena: It was mostly, "You're the CEO." You kept saying that. And so like going into December was this like huge shift in my head, and it was like, "Hey, I intend to be sold out sooner rather than later. I have all of these spots." It just sort of like, I was like, "If I if it's going to be hard to fill all these spots, like why don't I just like do it now?"

Oh, that was it. And then you gave us the challenge of like make it a party. And since I left MTV TV production for the event planning team, so I love me a good party. So that was really speaking my language. So then I was

[Joyful Marketing](#) with Simone Grace Seol

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

like, “Oh my God, I could teach people how like consults are actually just like planning for a party or a selling spree is just like a party.”

Simone: Okay, pause just to give context. Did I have you all give yourselves a challenge for finding clients?

Serena: Mm-hmm.

Simone: Yeah, so I had everybody give themselves a really juicy big challenge for signing clients and making money. And then the other second part of the challenge was, but whatever you do, your marketing selling plan, make it feel like a party, right? Like what would you have to do to make it fun and festive? Because it was December, right? And you really ran with it. So that's what she's talking about.

Serena: You spoke my language when you said party. Like in my head I was like, “Oh, I know how to do that.”

Simone: But it's so interesting because some people heard party and like froze, right?

Serena: Yeah.

Simone: Which I totally have compassion for because if you're used to being an introvert and like you feel awkward at parties and you're like, “Oh, parties, I don't know.” Then you, you know, got to go find a different metaphor, where, you know, where you have connection and you're enjoying yourself but without the scary overwhelming associations. But anyhow, yes.

Serena: For me, I was like, “Party, that's my favorite.”

Simone: That's my love language.

Serena: Yes, that's where like it's fun, the more people are fun. And it's important that everybody be different and that they feel safe to be

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

authentic. Because when I think of the best parties, they are not terribly necessarily buttoned up so much as like you're meeting people in the kitchen.

Simone: Yeah, there's a bunch of spontaneity and like, "Oh, I didn't think that was going to happen." You know, and it's like lots of stories from it.

Serena: Yes, and connection. And like so that framework really helped. And then if we can use the party analogy again, it's like you want to show up authentically. Like you don't want to be in something that you're miserably uncomfortable in because you won't be able to connect because you're constantly like adjusting your Spanx or your heels that are rubbing wrong.

Simone: And you're a terrible party host.

Serena: Right, can't do that. So like authenticity. So that's where just all of that came together and that was where like, I guess, it felt like I just want to show up as me because that is by far the most effective and efficient. Efficient, and then effective in that order. I was like, if I'm trying to like pretend I know exactly what I'm doing it's going to take more effort and I'm probably going to fuck it up. So then I just started speaking my truth and inviting people to the party of Serena.

And then, based on a wild idea that I don't think I told you about in mastermind because I was like, "I'm just going to do it." I just thought, "All right, I'm 10k again." Which stuck forever until I raised. But then I was like, "I'm going to do a money back guarantee. Like I know I can coach so powerfully that I can help people."

And then based on it was December and my beliefs about people buying coaching in December and January. I was like, "Dude, if someone hires me in December there's no way they won't make this 10k feedback by the end of like January if they do what I tell them.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

So that was it, I offered four different people a money back guarantee. So I was like, “You pay me 10k, you got to do like the homework and the coaching that we talk about. But if you don't make 10k back in US dollars by the end of January, I will refund 7K and we'll terminate our sessions. So I liked it because they had buy in, like they had skin in the game.

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: And I remember the first person I offered it to it gave me, I know it's changing the C, but it gave me like such certainty, as you said, like even though I was back at 10k, like it just felt no-brainer to me. So four people signed up.

Simone: I love that. That worked because you were making that decision from a place of like so much certainty, and abundance, and like wanting to share in the goods like, “I just know that they can do this.” As opposed to like, “Oh, if I don't offer a guarantee then they're not going to want to sign up. So this is the only way I can make them feel safe.”

Listen, everybody, I want to say it on the record, you can change the C as much as you like, right? You don't always have to manage your mind. You can lower your price. You can decide without telling your coach that you're going to offer a money back guarantee. Not that I would have stopped you, but I might have asked you about your thoughts.

But then it's not bad because you're changing the C, if anything I want you to try changing more C's so that you get more data points. I would rather you go out and make 15 different decisions without telling your coach and just like let things explode in your face or let things be amazing. And just learn from the result as opposed to just sitting there like paralyzed like, “What's the right thing to do? I should manage my mind around this but I can't because I'm having resistance.” Right?

So I'm so glad that you did that. I think it's a super powerful move. And just the proof of the pudding that your mindset was in the right place. That you

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

were resonating and connecting from a place of belief and abundance and this is a no-brainer kind of energy, is that all these clients signed up and gave you money and were presumably happy.

Serena: All but one. All but one, but I think that's fair. And I also think that's fair -

Simone: I actually want to talk about that too because we coached on this a little bit or we talked about this in the mastermind. About how like you can have the most spectacularly successful year, like Serena or like I had for the past couple of years, whatever. It doesn't mean that every single experience with your client is going to be like rainbows and daisies, and like a total love affair, right?

And in fact, I tell people all the time like having like client experiences where they're not 100% thrilled with what you're giving them and they want to quit or they have complaints, whatever, it's a numbers game. Like if you have enough of a volume of clients that is just mathematically going to happen. I don't care how wonderful a coach you are; I don't care how skilled you are. Right?

So I did want to bring that up today because we talked about it in the mastermind, it's so important. Like you might think, "Oh, at Serena's level, at Simone's level, they probably don't deal with that, they don't have to deal with stuff like that." We totally do. And it means nothing other than that we served a lot of clients, we interact with lots of human beings. And that's part of the package.

Serena: Yeah.

Simone: It literally means you're successful.

Serena: I enjoy that point of view because yes, and that was part of what I loved. I don't remember when, but at some point, you were talking about

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

having, it was in one of your emails, like a client who like threw something or I think stormed out.

Simone: Yeah, slammed the door in my face. Yeah.

Serena: Ouch, emotional Ouch. And that's how I felt. So ultimately in December, I had nine new people come in and then I had two re-ups. So that's how I ultimately had my 110k a month. And then in January, one of those only four people, four people got the money back guarantee. Because I offered it to like another person. And I love it, she was like, "No, I'm going to make 10k either way."

Simone: Love it.

Serena: And I remember being like, "Yeah, actually, this is what I want in my next clients. People who really like don't even need to hear anything about a money back guarantee."

Simone: I like that it was a process for you to get there.

Serena: Yes.

Simone: For you to be at a level of belief to attract the level of clients who are all in. Because I think we look at, you know, we look at our role models or coaches, whatever, who are maybe charging more than we are and who are, you know, working with the kind of clients that we want to work with. And we think that, "Oh, I should just be able to change my thoughts and change my energy. And I should just believe better, and more, and deeper, and I should be able to have that tomorrow."

But the way you just told your story, it took you months to get to a place where you could like get your brain on board with a 10k price. And before that you were just selling, selling, selling, serving, serving, serving at 5k. And like our brains need time to believe. Our brains need time to let things kind of like gel in our own unconscious minds, right?

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

And even after you raised the price to 10 like it sounds like it took them another month or two to get to a point where it's like. "No money back guarantee not needed." And that actually doesn't invalidate the steps that you took to get there, it's the opposite. It means it validates all the steps that you had took. It was great, you had to offer that money back guarantee, you had to lower that price. So you have to go through all the in between steps to build the belief.

Like I really want to invite everybody to think of belief as like a house that you build brick by brick, right? You can't clap a house into existence. I think a lot of times that's how we envision belief as being like, "Oh, I switched my belief, there it is."

Well, sometimes it works like that, but 98% of the time in business, you know when it comes to believing in the value of our coaching. When it comes to acclimating to our success. When it comes to inhabiting a new self-concept, getting used to a new level of abundance, and money, and success, having-ness, you know, all of that. It takes time. It's inelegant, it's done one step at a time, one decision at a time. And a lot of the times the decisions feel very uncomfortable.

So I love that this conversation is just so honest. And, you know, just on the surface, it's like, "Oh, Serena's first 200k year, that's amazing." But then behind the scenes, right, is all this stuff.

Serena: And all worth it. But yes, so much. And so the 10k, I only issued four money back guarantees like in the first two weeks of December, and after that I took my, I think of it as training wheels. Like they were my training wheels and I was like, "I'm good. I've got this."

So yeah, in early January one of the four who received the money back guarantee, like sent me an email and was like, "I don't like your coaching. I don't think you have any strategy. I don't think you do mindset. And you provided no materials."

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Just so we're clear, I've never provided materials to anyone ever." That and then we talked briefly about it in group, but what really like got my goat and I got to do a lot of self-coaching on this was remember the deal was I'm going to help you make 10k. And if not, I'll give you a partial 7k refund.

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: So this person was like, "It's not working, it's horrible, blah, blah, blah. You're doing nothing." I was like, "Okay, fine." So I just refunded unused sessions.

And then I saw the same person a few weeks later in January, bragging about their larger than ever month where they'd made like significantly more than 10k. And I was like, fired up. I'm like, "They didn't want to pay me." I think that was like one of their issues. So then I got to sit down with my notebook and my feelings and work through because I had a lot -

Simone: Did they just lie because they just wanted to like not pay you?

Serena: Yeah, and just so we're clear I don't follow them anymore, because I still have a human brain. So like I can't see that anymore because it was a whole post about the exact number they made, which was very close to 20k. And I did all of this on my own. And I was just, man, I was fire. Because I'm like, hey, I'm not saying I did that for them but just my thoughts about the situation were that like they wanted to get out of paying me. And that is what they did.

So my thought about the situation was they took advantage of me. And since I did my thought work, I got to realize that the idea they took advantage of me, or I was taken advantage of, does not serve me.

Simone: Right.

Serena: Like never mind them, like that puts me in a space and an energy that does not serve my clients. It certainly doesn't serve me; it doesn't serve my partner. So I got to decide that once again, one of my favorite

[Joyful Marketing](#) with Simone Grace Seol

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

intentional thoughts, my clients always get exactly what they need and more from our relationships. So hopefully, she's, I mean, fiscally better off than when we first started coaching, I know. But like and then I get to go back to being a coach instead of being in that energetic space that drains me and like wasn't healthy for me or helpful.

But to your point, like yeah, humans man, if you hang out with enough humans, there's going to be moments that it doesn't go the way that maybe I would have preferred.

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: And it's fine.

Simone: And all of it just adds to your, it builds your bones, right, it builds your muscle, you just get stronger, right? Like I always say there are clients that you have whose job is to make you feel amazing about yourself. And then there are clients whose job it is to make you better.

And the clients who make you feel amazing are the clients who you feel like you barely have to coach them, you just like say one thing and they go change their lives on their own. And they're super grateful and they're like, "You're amazing." I'm like, "No, you're amazing." Right? Those are like, you exist to make me feel amazing about myself as a coach.

And then other clients, they give me experiences without which I would not have to self-coach, without which I would not grow as a human being and as a coach. Without which I would not develop the resilience and deeper self-belief that I would need. And all of that actually in the end makes me more money, the more I grow.

So everybody helps me make more money by either making me feel amazing and validating me, or by forcing me to sharpen myself and for me to grow more deeply into my own wisdom. So there's no such thing as a bad client.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: No, it was another fucking opportunity for growth.

Simone: Yes.

Serena: AFOG. Yay AFOG. Yeah, the client gave me a gift in truth. It took me a hot minute to reveal it. But the answer is yes.

Simone: Yeah, awesome.

Serena: And then I just sold a bunch of stuff in January, January was 75k. And then actually, based on one of our mastermind calls, I had some people on the wait list that I let go of. It was like, “Hey, this isn’t actually the exact right fit.”

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: And so then, ultimately, I sold a few more spots. And then I guess it was like a week or two ago that I was like, “Oh, right. I said I was going to stop selling.” I’m done selling and now I’m just focused on my first mastermind.

Simone: So good. Tell me about the time you realized you were going to make a million dollars.

Serena: It was in, I think, whatever, it was one of your bonus classes in mastermind and I was playing with the numbers. And then in January I was playing with the numbers. And then, like two weeks, okay, last week I was emailing my accountant, which was so fun because he spent honestly years being like, “Serena, you’re worth so much more.” Because I made like 70k once again. And there’s nothing wrong, that’s big money, but in New York, that’s not. And even in Texas, because I’m home in Texas.

So I’m like, “Listen, Ernie, I’m pretty sure it’s going to be 900k this year, that is not a typo.” Like, that’s so fun. I just like imagine him being like, “What the hell is she doing?” I can hardly wait.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Simone: I love it. It was just a few years ago that I had to, my CPA and I made a deal where I babysit his kid in exchange for him doing my taxes, because that's how much money I didn't have.

Serena: Yes, he used to give me a discount.

Simone: He was like you can babysit my kid. I was like, "I love children. I will do that instead of giving you money, because I don't have any."

Serena: I totally anticipate a big as bill this year, because many times he's like, "I'm only charging you 250 because you're not making enough." Like exactly. And I feel like this year he's going to be like, "Hey, I put an extra thousand on there because..."

Simone: But listen, it's like we're going from putting your coaching bill on your boyfriend's credit to, "Oh, I'm going to make a million dollars." In what is it? Like six months?

Serena: Yeah, like it was a pivotal moment when I asked Matt, "Can I use your credit?" Actually rewind, it was a pivotal moment when I decided if Matt wasn't going to let me use his credit card I was going to call my mom. Like when I decided I was going to be in your mastermind. It was like truly the beginning of I am not kidding.

Simone: Yeah, this is happening.

Serena: All of it. Like I want to be a seven-figure earner. A multiple seven figure earner and not in the next 10 years.

Simone: That's why I don't want to back down on having like just such a grand vision for myself and for my clients. Because, of course, money isn't everything. Like at some point. I mean, I'm sure you're there too. It's like at some point, money is just money, it doesn't validate anything, it doesn't mean anything. But like to go from a place where your self-concept grows from I have, what did you say like four clients when you entered the mastermind?"

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: Mm-hmm, four.

Simone: Yeah, I have four clients, to six months later, “Oh, I'm on track to make a million dollars this year. That is possible. And as amazing as Serena is, she's not special. I'm not special. We're people on the exact same journey as you. We all have our unique gifts and we, like Serena's thing is pole dancing and parties and MTV. And my thing is, I don't know. Like we all have our things, right?

And just it's so amazing to hear your story. And how everything that went into it and how incremental it was. And how much you showed up for yourself. And how much you delved into the work and took advantage of every single resource that there was in the mastermind. And you never wasted an opportunity to self-coach and to take responsibility for your own experiences.

Like that's it, it's nothing. It's all the things, all the tools that we already have as coaches, right? Nothing she described on this on this call is like, you know, revolutionary. It's all we know, and she just did it all. And that's it. That is what can happen in a six-month container.

And I just want to keep like saying that out loud and letting more people know that this is available to them. Not because they're not worthy or they're doing it wrong if they don't have the same growth experience as someone like you. And this is just one, what do you call it? One slice of your growth, right? Like it's just one cross section, one part of your growth and you can look at it a much longer timeline and look at all the other work you did.

But I just want whatever assumptions you have about your own future, whatever you think your limits are, always just like start by putting a question mark there, right? You have no idea. You have no idea. And everything, all the possibilities are open to you. And that sounds kind of cliché but it's really, really true.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: No, it's true.

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: That's the part that I'm happy you're saying it. Like for anyone who's listening like, oh my god, so I just earlier had meeting with my CFO, Amanda, and like she referenced you told me you once, you know, were down to \$100. And I like belly laughed. I was like, "That was normal for half of my 30's. Not once I was down to \$100. That was very normal." And so for any listeners who are like, "Oh, I want to do someone's mastermind, or I want to do X, Y, Z I'm like do it, prioritize it.

Simone: Yeah.

Serena: So doing the stretch, because I think sometimes like it pains my physical body when people are like, "Oh, I want to do that but I don't have the money." I'm like, "Oh, if I waited till I had the money, I don't like to imagine that parallel universe." I don't know where I'd be. But I don't think it'd be anywhere near where I am.

And it's not about the money, as you said, it's about the happy, it's about the like I have a lover and two cats and I like myself. And even though I get scared all the time and cry, and I'm normal and get PMS, I also am like I feel like one of my... Okay, one of my nephew's rescued a kitten and it had a serious pet bill. And the short version is I could throw money at it, not interesting. I didn't used to be able to do that. And in Texas, we had a snowpocalypse ice situation and I could throw money at it.

And I used to like worry about paying rent and my health care when I had it. And now I'm like, there's a different quality of life when fundamentally I can focus on being of service and being connected to my people and knowing that I also have some resources that I can also use to support the people and the values that I love.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

And that was not available to me when I was broke. I was just stressed out all the time desperately trying to make ends meet. And now that I am like, “Holy shit, if there is a cause or a person that I want to support, I have options that were fundamentally unavailable to me even this time last year.” It’s a really fun feeling, I want everyone to have it.

Simone: We are both on a mission, aren't we?

Serena: Yes.

Simone: Make sure everybody who wants it, has it?

Serena: Yes, big, happy money.

Simone: Which is exactly what I was going to say next. Okay, tell us about Big Happy Money and your mastermind. And tell everybody why they should be in it.

Serena: Okay, Big Happy Money is a concept that was sparked in a consult. So can't nobody tell me nothing that consults aren't life altering. I was literally on a consult with another coach, Maggie Reyes, and she introduced the concept. She told me happy money, only when you're just thrilled to spend it and I'm thrilled to receive it.

And so that concept, and then started reading half of a book. People are like, “What book is it?” I'm like, “I only read half.” But he was really into saving. And I prioritize making money more than saving.

Simone: It's like stop reading that, but I mean take this concept, yeah.

Serena: Yeah, read the first half and tell me what else happens. But basically, then I was like, “Oh, but I love the energetic concept that he was describing so elegantly.” Because it's like we all have this choice. And so then it all just sort of clicked in place where I'm like, “Oh, okay.”

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

So what shows up for sometimes coaches or clients when they are like, don't want to spend money and constantly trying to save money, that mindset is also playing into them thinking no one will ever buy from me, because they don't actually like buying.

Simone: Right, everybody is saving.

Serena: Right, and they're constantly like, "But how do I not spend money?" So they're thinking that's what everyone else thinks. Where when you're like, "You know what? I like spending money on things that I super value." Then as coaches or creators we get to focus on creating, you know, value, knowing that people will spend money on things they value.

So I just sort of fumbled into the concept and then I decided I'm just going to like put it on glitter and steroids and make it Big Happy Money. Because I'm like, "Money is great, but what about big happy money?"

Simone: Love it.

Serena: Like why are we just going to like, "Yay, I made, you know, enough."

Simone: Yeah, it's extra Serena touch of like, Big Happy Money, I love it. It just like glitter bomb, like I'm feeling it.

Serena: Yeah, yeah, that's exactly. Thank you, you get it. It's big.

Simone: Yeah, totally get it.

Serena: I'm like, "That's great, let's do more. More is more." So Big Happy Money started there. And then for the mastermind, I'm hosting this first one in Austin. And Simone, I'm telling you and your listeners first because it just happened. So I hired my event producers and like it's a big event. I'm spending like, I want to tell you the number and [crosstalk].

Simone: You're spending big happy money on Big Happy Money.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Serena: Yeah, that's what it is. Yeah, they're ultimately, like our fee is 20k before you even spend on the event. And I like got to go through all the things that I think everyone goes through when they're about to like do a big investment of like, "Okay, but what is the purpose of this?"

And so for me I'm like, I want us to be alive and sort of with the dance history, not as a "dancer" though I have mad respect only for all dancers. But like it's the I want us to be together, and I want this container, and I had a vision, and I want to be a good steward of the vision.

Simone: Oh my God, is it going to be the best party ever?

Serena: Yes, like literally.

Simone: Oh my god, I want to go.

Serena: I told you, if you want to come we'll get you a couch. And if you want to come after the baby's born at another event, we'll get you a couch, and we'll get you a little crown on the couch, and we will set you up.

But that's it, like it's meant to be an epic three-day experience. Like that's all I'm sharing at this exact moment. And people, please, you can go to serenahicks.com. It's going to be 10k just to be upfront about the cost, it's an investment. I'm expecting everybody to make way more than that in our time together.

But it's for people anyone who wants to like feel glorious about making and spending money and growing their wealth. Like I want people who want to feel glorious.

Simone: That is a no-brainer offer. So good.

Serena: Oh, thanks.

Simone: So excited for you, so excited for all of your clients. I just know that this is going to be like fucking legendary.

Ep #133: Big Happy Money Secrets with Serena Hicks

Okay, I wish I could just keep talking to you forever but this has to come to an end. You already said that website people can find you at serernahicks.com. Where else can people find you, and stalk you, and love you?

Serena: So I live on Facebook because that's why I'm happy. So it's Serena Hicks AF. Don't even go to my business page, I don't even use my business page. But my personal page, if you go to facebook.com it's Serena Hicks AF. And then my Instagram is XOXOSerenaHicks as a nod to the Gossip Girl show that I just loved so much.

Simone: I love it. I love you Serena, this is amazing.

Serena: I love you, Simone. Thank you.

Simone: You're so welcome. Okay, everybody go find her, love her, be in her mastermind, all the things. I like never know how to wrap these things up, I'm awkward. Okay, we're going to go now. Bye everybody.

Serena: I'm blowing air kisses; I'm blowing air kisses. Bye.

Simone: All right, air kisses. Bye.

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