

Ep #184: How to Create a Group Program with an ADHD Brain with Meg Kierstead

Full Episode Transcript



With Your Host

Simone Grace Seol

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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.

Hey everybody! Guess what? We have on the show my friend, my client, the great Megan Kierstead, with whom I am going to have the conversation that you've been waiting to hear, which is how to create a group program.

Simone: You know, so many people are interested in creating a group program, and pretty much, like, I want to sit the entire coach world down and tell them these things before they get started on group program creation. And Megan is nodding. So you know this is going to be juicy. We have some really important insights to add to the conversation we think you should know.

Especially coming from the point of view of those who maybe don't operate in the neurotypical way, for whom the creative process might become a little bit different because you have an ADHD brain, for whom the idea of planning and executing something slightly over the longer term, that might be different for you than how it works for somebody who has a super neurotypical linear brain. We want to demystify program creation, we want to add some whacky ideas about how it could be done, and I think no better person to talk to, for me, about that, than our guest Megan. Welcome to the show.

Who are you and why are you perfect person to talk about this?

Megan: So I am a neurodivergence brain love coach. And I'm the perfect person to talk about this, because as it turns out, I am launching a program three, four days from now, so I'm in the middle of this, and I have seen the whole beautiful miraculous process through, and it's been really messy, and it's been hard. It has been long, but man, is it fun. So I also, I'm a six

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figure coach. I think we'll have probably at least fifteen people in the playground on launch opening day, so I consider it a wide success.

Simone: Wait, wait. You haven't mentioned the part where you already sold seven spots.

Megan: Oh, yeah, I think it might even be eight because another person messaged me since we last talked.

Simone: Just to lay it all on the table, how much is it?

Megan: I think that would be, like, around 10K.

Simone: Okay. So she has a 10K group program, it hasn't even opened yet, it has seven, possibly eight because she just got a message before she got on this call, people already lined up and waiting to buy. So Megan, we go way back. She started as one of my one-on-one clients like three years ago, and then she went through the last round of the sovereign business mastermind, and we kind of worked on this entire process of her, like, downloading the idea for this program together.

And then we walk through her creating it together. And I want to share with all of you how it can be done in a way where you're not really, like, following the rules other people say you should follow, when you're not really going by the template, and the expectations and the standards and the sequence that everybody assumes that you have to follow. So this is going to be so cool. So, Megan, you said you're a, what exactly do you call yourself? A neuro...?

Megan: I don't know, I play with it. It's neurodivergence brain love coach. I focus mainly on ADHD and helping people create the life and business they really have always wanted but didn't think was possible.

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Simone: Amazing. So do you remember, let's take you back to, do you remember when you first started to try to create a group program? I don't remember the exact details, but something was happening, and I was, like, hold on, you gotta pause and slow down. What was that about?

Megan: So I did, I actually did a group this past fall that was meant to be a cohort base thing, and it was called Love the Shit Out of Your Neurodivergent Brain, and I didn't really know why I was doing it beyond the fact that I knew, like, yeah, there wasn't anything out there that felt like it taught people how to love their neurodivergence, but beyond that, I was, like, eh, I'm gonna do it. Which, of course, in my sales and marketing energy, showed up because I'm like, I don't know what I'm doing, you guys should maybe join. And to be fair, people got value on it, but I wasn't sold on it, either, which I'm sure came out in sales and marketing because I have no idea what I'm doing.

Simone: So let's, to be clear, you sold. You sold it.

Megan: I think I sold, like, six spots.

Simone: Yeah, and people had a, people got amazing value out of it. They got amazing results out of it. I don't want you to downplay that. Because I remember you, like, evaluating that, and it was a great program. But it didn't sell to the extent that you wanted it to, and you didn't love it, to the extent that you could have, just because why? Tell us.

Megan: I didn't love it because it felt like I was trying to do a program like everyone else does a program. I wanted to, like, have a curriculum that week by week you filled out, and it followed a logical progression, and we only coached on those things. And that just isn't me. I'm a wild, weird, whacky glittery human being. So essentially, it felt much more like a college academic course, I would say, almost. Like, I felt like a professor.

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Simone: Which, everybody assumes a program, a coaching program has to be like. It has to be a college academic course with a syllabus, and maybe even a reading list, you know?

Megan: Oh, I had a reading list.

Simone: Oh, you had a literal --

Megan: I think I did. And I think I literally, I definitely have links to academic articles, which, don't get me wrong, I probably will still include in the Black Sheep Playground, my current group, but, you know, it was very buttoned up and, you know, I'm going to teach you about the things. And one of the things I noticed was there wasn't a lot of, like, interaction between the people, there wasn't, like, a sense of community, because I had created this hierarchy between me and the people in it, like, they were -- like, I was teaching them. And I've actually taught college courses, so it felt familiar. But I was like, this isn't what I want. There's nothing about this that is embracing neurodivergence in the structure of the course.

Simone: Yeah, I just want to chime in and say it's not that doing things in the style of a college course with a syllabus and reading lists, it's not that it's bad or that people will hate it if you do that, not at all. It's just, I think you have to do that first in order to realize, oh, hey, like, I did it the standard way, and now I think I might want to do things differently. Right? Like, you have to go through that experience.

Megan: Yeah, I wanted to do something that felt much more like me. Not to say, I fucking love school. I really like learning, you know, I think one of the things we did in one-on-one coaching was actually, like, help me, like, become a professor and teach a college course, so don't get me wrong, I love that, but there was a lot of, like, linearity and predictability, and knowing everything ahead of time. And I want, for my group, especially since the whole point is to love neurodivergence, is to have surprise and

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novelty and and unconventionality, and all of these beautiful values that weren't reflected in sort of how I was doing it. It just didn't feel right.

Simone: Do you remember, so correct me if I'm remembering the details wrong. Do you remember, actually, tell us first how the idea of the Black, so you were there, thinking, okay, I want to do things a little bit differently, and I think you were trying to figure out and outline the next thing?

Megan: Yeah.

Simone: Like, kind of in a linear way. And what I mean by that, again, correct my where I'm misremembering -- it's like, okay, so I want to do things differently. You do a whole evaluation, this worked, that didn't work, I might want to do that differently, and then you were going about designing the next program, still using your linear mind, meaning, okay, so I'm going to go in and fix this, and here's a logical progression of how it's going to be different; it's gonna be like this, and you were just so in figure-it-out mode right away.

Megan: 100 percent. I was trying to, like, sit there and kind of, like, go through in a very, like, researcher kind of focus, like, why weren't people engaged? How many people looked at this resource? And it didn't -- it certainly didn't spark joy.

Simone: Right. But it felt like you were doing the right thing, quote unquote, right? It felt like exactly what you should do, is to go into this figure-it-out analytical mode, to design your next program. And how you know, by the way, you keep hearing us talking about the linear way, and how you know you're engaged in linear thinking and linear problem solving, which, again, isn't bad, it's just one of many ways to do things, right, how you know you're doing the linear thing is when you're in the mode of analysis and figuring it out.

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When you're like, I'm going to figure this out by thinking about it. I'm gonna analyze it so I have more insight into it. Again, it's not bad, it's just one way of doing things. So I think that's when I was, like, hmm. I see Meg -- this is all happening in the mastermind by the way, I see Meg trying to figure this out, trying to create her next program, and the way she's talking about it, the way she's going about it, I'm not sensing that she's feeling joyful in her soul. Right?

So as a business coach, when I look at my clients, they're talking about their offers, they're talking about their pricing, they're talking about their marketing and sales or whatever, I barely listen to the contents of what they're talking about. What I'm really listening for is how is that person feeling right now? What is the unconscious messaging that they're giving me right now beyond their words? Like, what emotion, what energy am I reading from what they're saying, and looking at what Meg was doing at the time, everything she said was so smart, it was all perfect, but when I read her energy, it wasn't, like, this vibrant alive, sparkly energy, which Meg is a vibrant alive, sparkly person. So I was, like, there's a disconnect here. And, so, do you remember what I advised you next?

Megan: I remember in particular there was a moment, this is an important story because I think one of the things to realize is that, like, inspiration comes from many, many places, and to keep an open mind as you're building this about, like, what are the things you're going to want to include. I was working with actually KJ, KJ Sassypants.

Simone: Who's been on the podcast, friend of the show.

Megan: So fabulous. We talked about how exactly that, in the bones of my structure is this, like, hummingbird, you know, sparkly energy, and I was shaming myself around it, because as it turns out, that's one of the things society really shits on us for is, like, not conforming to, like, sticking to one career, choosing a major, going down one path.

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Simone: Choosing a niche.

Megan: Oh, my God, I had so much niche drama for exactly that reason. And so one of the things we worked on there was that, and then I remember coming back to the mastermind, I don't remember exactly what you told me, but was it essentially be myself?

Simone: Yes, that was it. I was like, stop trying to figure it out.

Megan: Yeah, I want you to just be me.

Simone: Stop using your mind to try to figure it out, and I want you to just step back, and, like, relax and stop thinking about it, and wait for it to come. I remember telling, do you remember me telling you that?

Megan: Yes, I do remember that now, especially because like two days later when I had coached myself on it about waiting, and, like, found peace, suddenly it came to me. Like, it was hilarious.

Simone: When you stop trying to figure it out, it comes to you.

Megan: Yeah. I sat there, I was like, I'm going to let this take as long as it takes, I'm not going to, like, push this, I'm not going to force myself to do this on a timeframe. And then literally the next day, I was, like, crap. I know exactly what we're doing. Or not exactly what we're doing, I felt the joy, I felt the spark. So by surrendering, that's when I really found what was next.

Simone: Yeah, because I remember when you were still trying to figure it out analytically it was so, here's another symptom, is that when you try to figure out something analytically, there's, like, a million questions you have to answer and a million problems you have to solve such as wait, what exactly is my positioning with this offer? Who exactly is my ideal client? What are their exact problems and what are my exact solutions and what's my five step process?

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And it's just when you try to figure it out linearly, you have to figure out all of these things. Right? And it might look totally air-typed, beautiful, logical, perfect on the outside, but then missing that sparkly vibrant quality that is part of who you are. And so just -- I do remember this exchange that we had in the mastermind Facebook group where you were having this epiphany, I was like, wait, so my plan for this is, like, I'm just going to sit back and be myself? I was like, yes, that's your plan. And I think at that point you had worked with me enough to be like, all right, I got it.

I know how to do that. As opposed to I think for some people for whom they're new to these ideas, they're gonna be like, wait, what does that mean? Sit back and be myself? I don't understand. But you got it, right, because you get it, and then you went right to work. Okay, okay, I'm going to do it, I'm going to sit back and be myself. And then as soon as you surrender, I love that you use the word surrender. I love that word and that whole idea. And I think some people, it just makes them a little like, surrender, that makes me feel like I'm losing control. And I want to offer this idea that what surrender really means, what we really mean by that, is actually a very proactive process of trusting unconditionally. Right?

So it's not like I'm going to sit back and surrender and, like, just see what happens, it's a very proactive choice that you make over and over and over to trust. To trust your creativity. To trust yourself. To trust the spirit of your business, and to trust the partnership between yourself and the spirit of your business, and trusting the genius of the soup of your unconscious mind. Right? So it's not surrender, sit back, it's that very active process. Would you agree?

Megan: 100 percent. Especially because, I mean, we even have evidence why this is necessary from, like, cognitive science. It actually takes time for the neurons in your brain to rewire and connect. And, particularly, when you're connecting novel ideas, you actually need to sleep. You need to rest.

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Simone: Yup.

Megan: So actually, like, literally giving ideas time to marinate in your head is necessary. I almost think of it like making some sort of stew that, like, needs to sit on the stove for a long period of time. It just won't be ready until it's ready.

Simone: I get hot and bothered when you talk science to me. And also, I love that -- like, the soup metaphor is perfect. Because whenever I make soup or stew, I'm always so impatient, I want to eat the whole thing that very day, but I'm always, like, amazed by how much better everything is the next day, and even better the day after. Especially if it's, like, stew with, like, meat. And it really, like, the only ingredient that you added is time.

And everything had a chance to kind of fall apart and, like, cohere together, and I think that's something that we are so loathed to do. It's not something that we're taught to do, how to sit back and add the ingredient of time. And in that process, like, I'm not doing anything, how could this be productive? But know that just because you're not efforting something, it doesn't mean you're not doing anything.

Your unconscious mind, like, you're -- I mean, that even makes it sound a little bit, like, mystical, which it totally is not, it's, like, literally brain science. When you're quote unquote "doing nothing," your neurons are firing, they're busy integrating, creating new neural networks in order to create new knowledge, in order to make the stoop, I just combined the word stew and soup and called it stoop.

Megan: Stoop. Make the soup more delicious.

Simone: So this is another way you deviate from that linear programming supremacies that, you know what? My action strategy for creating this is gonna be fucking doing nothing and thinking about nothing and sitting back and relaxing and just doing what makes me happy for a week, because,

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like, guess what? News flash. That's not doing nothing. That's when you're adding that critical active ingredient of time.

And you do nothing, and the soup magically gets so much better. Imagine instead of just letting the soup sit, you just kept adding shit to it, like, hmm, it's not as good as it could be. I'm just going to add more salt. I'm going to add more oregano. I'm going to add more vegetables. And you just keep adding shit, it's gonna taste like shit. It would taste so much better if you would just step back and go play the guitar, and then come back. Right?

Megan: Yeah, it would be so much better. Yeah, I cook a lot. I've definitely done that, and then it's, like, well, there's no coming back from that.

Simone: Exactly. And, you know, people asked me a lot how I created Joyful Marketing, what my process was like and it was literally just sitting, doing nothing, and waiting for my mind to digest what I already know, to integrate to, like, ferment, and, like, just having absolute faith in that, in the idea that something's going to emerge. Like, there's going to be a download that comes when the soup is ready.

You know what? I'm going to bring in the analogy of kimchi, which is, like, my people's food. You make kimchi, you eat it right away, it's going to taste like shit. You keep adding to it, it's going to taste like shit. You make the kimchi, and then you step away, and unlike soup, sometimes you let the kimchi sit for, like, a month or, like, several months before it's just the right amount of fermented to eat. So actually, that's a perfect metaphor. My process of creating Joyful Marketing, it took me, like, six months. And most of it, I wasn't creating. I was letting the kimchi ferment.

Megan: I did the exact same thing. I don't know if mine would be, like, wine or soy sauce, but, like, yeah, because I remember that same thing.

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Simone: Or cheese.

Megan: Yes. Cheese is what I would be fermenting. But I originally planned on essentially, like, in my year strategy, I planned on I think launching again in December. Right now we're talking, it is, I'm going to open the doors on April 1st. So one of the things I had to really coach myself on was, like, letting it take the time it really needed to take. And that unsurprisingly brought up a bunch of shit. It brought up money, money shit, it brought up, you know, you don't know what you're doing, this is never going to work, all of the things. Time is also a really interesting thought finder because it gives you time to figure out all of the stuff that you're going to need to coach yourself on.

Simone: That is fucking gold. I just need to pause right there. I wish I could, like, I don't know, I wish I could plaster that everywhere. Time is an incredible thought finder. You want to know what's in your brain? Give yourself a stretch of empty time, and it's going to show you all the thoughts that are just, like, lurking under the surface that you were not looking at because you were distracting yourself being busy. Now you gotta look at it. Such an amazing insight.

Megan: Yeah, I think I didn't start actually, like, putting the -- like, literally having stuff to exist in the playground until maybe a month ago. Doesn't mean I wasn't thinking about it a lot. Doesn't mean I wasn't coming up with amazing ideas. But, like, in terms of, like, actually putting pen to paper and planning shit and putting content in there and choosing a platform, I did it maybe a month before. So, like, five months was fermenting. Five months was coming up with all of the ideas, and letting them simmer, and letting them taste more delicious.

Simone: And you sitting down and trying to figure it out and analyze it and coach yourself into getting it is like taking the kimchi that's supposed to be

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fermenting and adding more ingredients to it and ruining it. So stop doing that.

Megan: Yeah, pretty much.

Simone: My process of creating Joyful Marketing was exactly the same. It was, like, months and months of just fermentation, and like Meg said, let's not sugarcoat it. That whole time is not, like, pleasant. It's not like you peacefully taking naps on the hammock and, like, gleefully enjoying a novel. Like, a lot of it -- like, I was miserable because I was also constantly battling the thoughts of, like, this is never gonna work, I don't see the light at the end of the tunnel, it's been four months and I still haven't figured this out. And your brain is going to feed you all of this shit. That is part of the fermentation. You have to allow for that to happen, and you have to pass through it in order to get to the good shit on the other side.

Megan: Yeah. December, which is when I was theoretically supposed to launch, was my lowest revenue month, I think, to date in my business. And I had to coach myself through that, because guess what? I had thoughts about it, and I had thoughts that, you know, I wasn't going to succeed and I needed to do this now.

Simone: And you had upcoming investments?

Megan: Oh, yes. Very much so. Yes, I had to pay for the mastermind, I had to re-up with my coaches, so, yeah, I really had to sit there with the discomfort that, like, nope, I am going to let this take as much time as it needs, and I will know when I'm ready, and when I'm ready, I'm going to set a date.

Simone: For somebody that might be wondering, what do you think is the difference, if there is a difference, you tell me -- difference between, like, the proactive, like, fruitful, like, sort of mode of trusting and releasing and

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letting be, versus, like, somebody might ask how do I know if I'm not just, like, checked out? What's the difference? What would you say?

Megan: I think it's if you're letting, I mean, it's the same answer we have a lot of times in coaching, which is letting yourself actually feel the feelings and, like, confront the thoughts that come up during the time. So, like, the thoughts that time finds for you, you have to engage with those thoughts. If you avoid those thoughts, that's the checking out. Because those thoughts are the things that are going to generate all the brilliance.

Simone: Oh, my gosh. That's brilliant. I could not have said it better. So good.

Okay. I want to make sure I cover this part, because doors are opening when? A few days?

Megan: Yeah, April 1st. So Tuesday... so it's Friday. So-

Simone: By the time you listen to this episode, it's probably already going to be open. So it's going to open in a few days, and parts of it are just, like, what's the word? I don't want to say, like, not dumb, but, like, open. How would you say it?

Megan: I would say embracing the open-endedness and novelty of being someone who has an ADHD brain. That's not the concise way to say it, but, like, I have intentionally not figured everything out because I want the entire structure of the program to be at least partially based on, like, surprise and novelty and living in the moment. Which, guess what? That's part of having a brain like this. So it felt really uncomfortable, but very subversive to be like, I'm intentionally not going to know everything's going to go in here. I also am intentionally going to change things occasionally, I'm gonna intentionally not have all the answers, because guess what? That's what an ADHD loves and craves. Novelty-

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Simone: So tell me some of the things that in your, like, I-gotta-turn-this-into-a-college-syllabus kind of brain, like, what you might have tried to figure out that you're intentionally not figuring out? Like, what are some examples of those things?

Megan: So one of the biggest examples that has been something I've really had to work on is, like, how to organize things and what to cover in the modules versus, like, the monthly challenges and stuff. And, like, at the end of the day, I want to give people the tools they need to thrive with the brain they have, and learn how to love their brain. So I have intentionally not included 100 percent of everything I know about it, because that would be too much.

One of the reasons ADHD brains don't do things is because they get overwhelmed. So we're going to be, like, teaching different concepts over time, depending on sort of what people want and need. So there isn't, like, in certain curriculums like you'd have all the modules generated ahead of time, I have some, but we're going to add to it. And we're going to add to it based on the monthly themes that I'm doing that are meant to spark novelty and creativity. So we're essentially building the curriculum together as we go along, which I think is really fun.

Simone: How exciting is that? I mean, that's so, so subversive. I think that oftentimes coaches, when they create group programs, they think that the curriculum that they create, like, the modules that they create, that is what sells the program. Like, what else am I going to tell people they're getting? Right? So in the absence of that you're like, well, part of it is that it's undecided on purpose, and we're going to figure it out together. What would you say to somebody who asks, if I don't know exactly what modules and exactly what content, exactly what problems and solutions I'm selling, then what am I selling? What would you tell them?

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Megan: You're selling you. You're selling your energy. It's the Joyful Marketing approach. In fact, I remember buying Joyful Marketing, and having no idea what you were going to teach in it. I assumed there was going to be something about marketing and joy, but you could have been selling me, I don't know, like, candles and how to breed fruit and I probably would have still bought it because I knew I wanted to work with you. I was the first in the door, guys, not to brag.

So I knew because I wanted to work with you. So my job in my marketing in what I'm selling is, like, talking about what it's like to really embrace your neurodivergence, and how that shows up for me. And just being me to the max. And as it turns out, that's what sells. Being me to the max.

Simone: I think that when we say what people buy is you and your energy, I think people can misinterpret that a couple ways. I think people misinterpret that, one, to mean that it's about, like, you selling an image of yourself or, like, a cultivate personality. You just shook your head really hard. What did you just think?

Megan: Yeah, I totally agree. It's not that at all. It is your unique form of genius and form of communicating with the world.

Simone: Yes. That's it. It's not that you're selling your personal, like, energy, like you're giving it away. It's not that people are coming to worship you. It's not that. It's, they're coming for that, you just said it perfectly. I can't say it better. Your unique genius that is encapsulated in the way that up show up, and in the way that you communicate.

So that's what I really want you to know. And that's often something, no, not often, it's 100 percent of the time something that you can't distill to a little elevator pitch, a little I help statement, and the easiest way I can describe that is by saying, like, if you wanted to find the love of your life and you had an online dating profile, it's like saying, it's like expecting the totality of the magic of the person you are to be captured in, like, an online

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dating profile, like, little description. If somebody thought they could do that for you, I would be insulted on your behalf. Because there is no way you as a person, as a human being are reducible to, like, a pithy little sentence or two. Right? So when it's the right connection, when it's the right chemistry people don't need to read the perfect words. They connect. The exact same thing happens with marketing. They think that just because you're putting your you-ness, your energy forward, it means that you're not offering solutions to problems anymore. And that is also not true. You also just shook your head really hard. So tell me.

Megan: Yeah, so what's interesting is, particularly if you go and look in my marketing, I talk about a lot of different things, but I am offering a shit ton of value. Everything that comes out of my mouth is meant to be valuable, and really meant to give people practical solutions.

Simone: To the practical problems that they have.

Megan: Exactly.

Simone: And they're very specific, and concrete, and practical, and you give tons of it all the time. People are always getting practical solutions from practical problems when you show up with your unique brilliance and energy, and when they are buying that. So, yeah.

Megan: And you couldn't. I tried vainly for, like, a year and a half, and I made a lot of money before that, but to bottle that into, like, a bullet point or sentence, and the reality is, all of the different things that I give value on, can't actually be represented in a single bullet point. They just can't. But that doesn't mean that what I'm offering isn't incredibly practical, actionable, valuable, it just doesn't have a pretty box that you can, like, put it in and tie it up.

And that makes sense because my brain isn't something that you can put in a box and tie up and, you know, give it a couple labels. No one's brain is.

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So part of that is really embracing the fact that you can teach people a bunch of different things. You can give so much value without dulling it and forcing it to constrain to a particular thing.

Simone: You know, I think that when you show up with your authenticity and your energy and your clarity, like, the clarity of your energy, right, that I think people fill in the gaps of the problem/solution and the I help statement for themselves. Right? Like, I could have ten people who, like, you know, follow me and they love me, they want to buy from me on social media, and I would ask them, like, hey, what problem do I help you solve?

Every single person will tell me something totally different. One person will tell me, you help me, you know, feel like I can do things with an ADHD brain. Another person will tell me, like, you help to solve my copywriting problem. And another person will say, you know, it's, like, another person will say I just needed to see an Asian-American role model who is successful. You make me feel like me being an Asian person can do things. That's not part of my positioning, it's just part of who I am.

Megan: That's so true. Oh, yeah, that's a really good way-

Simone: Do you have stuff like that happen?

Megan: 100 percent. Especially if I look across my clients, there isn't, like, a clear, like, check professionals or entrepreneurs or anything, like, I work with someone who's, like, a death care entrepreneur, or I work with an artist. And they're going to come to me and say I work with you to learn how to make money and, like, show up out in the world. Another one would be, I learn how to get past the things that are blocking me from actually taking steps in my business. All different, but very much because I am who I am, and I talk about the things that I talk about.

Simone: Exactly. It's so funny, yesterday I just had a little convo on Instagram with a permanent makeup artist who, like, loves mow because

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they're, like, you taught me how to do business with an ADHD brain as a permanent makeup artist. I was like, wow, that was not something I was trying to make happen, but very cool that it's happening. People will fill in the gaps. And some people follow me, they don't even have an interest in business and they're just like, I love the way you speak about, like, capitalism. And you just make me feel like, whatever.

And, so, all of this you enable when you believe that who you are is enough, and that what you have in your brain is really high value, and people want it, and people will be helped by it, like, those are the only beliefs you need. When you don't believe that and you're like I need a niche, an I help statement, and a problem/solution I need to be able to articulate all that perfectly before people will buy, when you believe that, what you are doing is you are hiding yourself from people.

You are kind of, like, cutting off your own energy from reaching people because you are using that almost like as a mask to hide behind. So you think all that shit you figured out is gonna help you, like, oh I have the world's most crisp, catchy I help sentence, that is -- you know what? The world's best I help sentence, the world's cleverest problem/solution pair is not as powerful as who you are just as a human being, showing up powerfully.

Megan: I mean, if we look at my story, the reality is essentially I did that the first time, the first go-round I did the, like, crisp -- I mean, you know, I had some doubts, but, like, I could tell you what you were going to learn, I could tell you what I was going to teach, I was gonna, you know, exactly what was in the curriculum, and, man, it is not as powerful, even in the same universe, as what we're doing with the Black Sheep Playground.

Like, and it's because I just surrendered to the magic of, like, I'm going to talk about the things I want to talk about, and share the things I want to share, and call in all the people who are aligned with that. Like, my people

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are going to come into the room and, like, love to learn everything that I share with them.

Simone: 100 percent.

Megan: No matter what it is. Yeah.

Simone: And you know recently I pulled the plug on the next launch of the Sovereign Business Mastermind, and instead I offered what became, what we started just calling it the mystery room because nobody knew what it was going to be, including me, by the way I still don't know what it's going to be, and, you know, lots and lots of people bought.

People, many, many, many people paid me \$20,000 to be in a thing where they had no idea what was going to happen, and judging by the way people responded to the application questions, you know, everyone had an extremely specific reason they wanted to be there. Meaning, everyone had an extremely specific question that they wanted answered, problem they wanted solved, specific area where they wanted to create more growth and clarity. You have to trust your people to be smart and thoughtful.

Megan: Yes, yes. So good. Because that's something that I've really struggled with. Because, like, how much do I trust them to go through this? And, like, how much guidance do I provide? How much freedom do I provide? In the moment where I was, like, I'm going to trust my people to get what they came for and get what they need and ask for help when they need help, like, everything just became so easy. And it became so obvious. Because if you don't trust them, then you are taking them down a path, not letting them find their own path.

Simone: 100 percent. And when you trust them, what you're also doing at the same time, is you are speaking to your highest client concept, and therefore, you are automatically energetically filtering for the highest caliber

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of clients who are going to do amazing work, have a great time and get great results without you, like, hand-holding them every step of the way.

Megan: One thing I can talk about is I started selling it way before I had any idea what was going to be in the container.

Simone: Oh, oh my gosh, I'm so glad you brought that up. That's so important. Because people -- uh, this actually makes me so, like, angry, just because of, like, I just see the waste of energy is when people wait to sell until they have the program figured out. Tell us why this is the worst idea in the universe.

Megan: Well, if it takes them time to figure out how to talk about what you're doing and, like, tap into the energy, and really, you know, connect with the spirit of your program, maybe that's an additional concept now, the spirit of your program, it takes time to do that, which means it's a learning process, and you need to iterate and get better at it like you need to do anything else, any time you're doing something new.

So you get to do that for a longer period of time, and you start generating excitement so that people start knocking down the doors. People are, early on, getting sold on why this is something that they want. And you -- it feels like a collaboration process. Like, truly, this energetic feedback group where you start seeing people get excited, and that gets you excited. You start learning from them, and they start asking questions. And that becomes how you actually build the program.

Simone: I couldn't have said it better. The first thing is that like you said, you know, saying that okay, when I have my program all ready to go, I'm going to start talking about it, is like saying I'm going to run a 10K race, and I am going to start training on the day of the 10K race. That- no, no, no, no, no. If you want to do all that, you want to start training now. You know, the best day was yesterday, second best day is today. Right? So you need that, what do you call that, like, a runway?

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Megan: Yeah.

Simone: Yeah, you need that runway. You need to start, like, warming yourself up and teaching yourself. Iterating how to talk about this with your people. That is a process. You have to give yourself time. And just echo what you -- the other thing you said, which is people, you know, I cite this research a lot: People need to see something, like -- actually I don't know what the exact numbers are, but people need to see the same thing, like, dozens of times to have it even register in their consciousness because everybody's so distracted.

So first of all, you need to see something a ton of times even for it to just register in your consciousness as something that you know about, let alone, like, be interested in buying. And then once you know that it exists, the offer has to be put in front of your face, like, 16 times before you're like, oh, yeah, I'm going to buy it.

A question that I often get is how do you know what to talk about? How do you know how to invite them into the container when you don't know fully what it's going to be, when things are not decided? So how would you answer that question? How would you start marketing and selling something that you haven't fully fleshed out?

Megan: You share your dreams. You write a, it's exactly like the creation process where you're actually building it. The marketing is the same thing. It's like, start sharing the things that light you up and that feel really juicy and aligned and push you and challenge you. Those are the ones that I love sharing. And trust that the ones that feel most aligned with the program that will come to be are going to be the ones that you keep talking about.

So I think if you go back and look at my marketing, I probably talked more, I don't know if it was more broadly, but I started getting really specific over time, and that's because I played around with a lot of different ideas, and

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input a lot of different things out there to see what felt like it belonged in the playground, and what didn't.

Simone: So I think, absolutely agree. And I think another way I would put that is that when you sell the program, when you're selling the actual program, you're not selling the program, you're selling you. You're selling, just selling you. And just giving people an opportunity to buy a part of your genius. Right? And, so, before the program is done, what are you selling? You're selling you. When the program is done, what are you selling? You're selling you.

So actually the constant that you are always marketing and selling is your genius and your authenticity, and when the program opens for enrollment, all that's happening is you're telling people, hey, here's a place where you can put your money to gain even greater access to this genius. Right?

Megan: So you know that, like, on the day the doors open, you get to be in there and get exposed to all that delicious energy ASAP, because being there on day one is pretty magical. I will say that. I love the times where I've prepaid for things, and then, like, gotten to go through the door and see what's inside. Because if you get something right away, it's less magical than like being able to open a present. There's a different-

Simone: Yeah, it's like look forward to a Christmas present for weeks.

Megan: Yeah, I actually wrote about this yesterday with an example of a client, like, waiting is delicious. Like, waiting is like sexy anticipation.

Simone: And when you only let people in, when you only let people know or let people buy on the day that it's open, then you're depriving your people of that delicious delight and anticipation of, like, paying in advance, and you know what else? I would even go as far as to say you get the transformation in advance when you know you are going to buy something

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or when you've already prepaid. Whatever like, the energy of the thing that you're buying has already been activated in you. Right?

So when somebody gets the idea four months in advance, oh, you know what? That person's doing a thing, I'm pretty sure I want to be in there, the magic of your offer has already become activated in that person's life. So that's why, even like the moment you know you're going to create something, you don't even have to know what it's fucking called. You don't have to know anything. But if you know that whatever you sell, you're only selling one thing, which is your genius, and you keep showing up in your genius, you keep showing up in your authenticity the person who's like, I don't even care what you're buying, but if you're doing something cool, I'm pretty sure I want to be there, and they're going to get excited, and alchemy is going to start for them.

So you want to start that as soon as possible. I mean, obviously, caveat, there will be times when you are cooking something up, and you want to keep it on the DL on purpose to protect the nature of the thing because you kind of want to let it percolate just in your own brain, like, have you ever had that, Meg?

Megan: So, yes. Like, I wasn't ready for a few months to even, I knew the Black Sheep Playground was going to exist, I knew it was going to be this sort of experimental, subversive structure, but I wasn't ready to talk about it yet. I was still ready to market, though. Like, I was ready to market me as a human, and that was what I was doing in the meantime. It's just I wasn't marketing that particular program.

Simone: Yeah, exactly.

Megan: It was marinating in the background. It was like it was on the stove, and I had, like, cookies to sell, and I was going out and selling those cookies, which, of course, ends up selling your program. But it wasn't ready because I wasn't ready to experiment yet. Like, I wasn't ready to start

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testing the ideas because I needed to coach myself on all that stuff we talked about earlier about, like money.

Simone: But there are times when you want to keep ideas to yourself, there are times when you even want to keep your own genius to yourself when that feels like the thing to do to honor it, which is very different from holding back from offering your genius. Holding back from making offers. Holding back from talking about your program because you have this thought, like, oh, it's not ready until... that's -- like, yeah.

Megan: Yeah. One of the things that I really cultivated as a thought early on was the Black Sheep Playground is going to help so many people. And that was the thing I always came back to. And I knew that if I believed that, and if I kept believing that, I would show up and sell it when it was ready to be sold. Because if it's going to help so many people, of course I'm going to sell it when it's ready. So that was the thing that, like, if I checked in with that, and I felt like I was still believing that, that was a sign that the reason I wasn't marketing yet was not because of, like, fear, it was because, you know, it was just marinating. It was on the stove.

Simone: This is such gold. This is literally, like, everything you're saying is, like, a masterclass in selling energetically and authentically. And I hope that you dear listener are going to really, really take this seriously and take notes and revisit these lessons when you are selling, actually, any offer, even if it's not a group program.

The last thing that I want to add, and I'll give you a chance to add anything that you think you missed, is I'm going to give everyone the answer to how I would respond if you asked me whether your group program can sell or whether I think you're ready for it. Right? Because I get this kind of question all the time. How do I know if I'm ready to do a group program? Do I have to do blah, blah, blah before I offer a group program?

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And there are lots of things that people think matter, but if you are being personally coached by me, this is how I would give you the answer. This is my process. I would listen to you talk about it, and I would listen for whether you are in this confident, clear alignment with the energy of the thing that you're offering. So this isn't, like, you know, this is a little bit of a subtle energetic thing. But as you're talking about your offer, once again, I'm probably not super listening to the details, but I'm listening for that unconscious communication. I'm listening for that alignment. That clarity. Do you have that clarity? Do you have that certainty? Do you have that energy?

For example, if I'm talking to Megan, she's talking about, like, ADHD playground for neurodivergent people, like, and it's very, like, sparkly, like, do you have the sparkle when you're talking about the sparkly thing? In other words, what is your relationship to the offer that you're talking about? I'm going to listen for that. I'm going to feel for that. I'm going to look at your body language, and see where that is.

And then part of what that tells me is when people get excited about offer ideas, and they're, like, I had this idea for a program, I think it could really sell, and they're in this very positive excited energy about it, because I have been doing this a long time, the next thing I'm going to look for is whether that positive excited alignment energy is failure-proof, or if it's not. What I mean by that is a lot of people get excited when they think their idea is going to succeed. When they think this is a great idea, people are going to love it, I'm going to make money, I'm going to be so happy. Right?

There's a difference between that quality, and, I love this idea, this is the perfect idea for me, and even if nobody loves it, even if nobody buys it for a while, and I keep failing at selling it, this is worth me championing. I'm going to, like, go to my grave trying to figure out how to sell this, if necessary, because that's how much I believe in it. Right? So one is an excitement about success, and the other is excitement that is, you know,

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paired with a deep conviction and a kind of gritty resilient belief in what you're selling. Oftentimes, when people come to me with group offer, you know, membership ideas, their excitement is the latter, meaning if they were to have a launch and zero persons sign up, it would be a flop, they would instantly go into doubting the offer.

When I see that, I'm like, I don't think you're ready for it. Because when you're truly ready for it is when you're ready to fail. When you're ready to be disappointed, when you're ready for your offer to meet the world and have nobody validate it by giving you money, and you're okay because you've already validated it first. That's when I'm like, you know what? I think this is a great offer. I think you should go for it. Because that's how I know they're prime to succeed.

What are your thoughts?

Megan: I literally experienced that energy in, I found the post that I made in the mastermind, it was, like, the beginning of November, and I essentially said something along the lines of, I have no fucking clue what this is going to be, I don't know how I'm gonna do it, it's gonna be terrifying, but, like, this is something the world needs, and I am going to do it. And that was the energy I showed up with, and guess what?

I did have to do some experimenting. I entirely forgot there was a very brief period in December where I tried to sell it as a completely different thing and it wasn't ready, and I was like, oh, well, I'm going to go figure it out. Because as it turns out, the conviction, I think I said something like, I feel it in my bones that this is something the world needs, and, like, I get to do the thing where I, like, reinvent business models and coaching and that kind of stuff, and I just -- I was like, I'm in for it. Don't know how it's going to happen, but I'm gonna do it. And that was the energy I showed up with. It wasn't excitement even. It was more, like, it was a deep in the soul bones conviction that this is the thing I am meant to do.

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Simone: Yes. Perfect. I think that's why I sell so much of my offers, too, is because I only sell things when I had that bone-deep conviction, and if I don't have it, I work -- I let things marinate, you know, I wait until I have it. And it's worth it. Because having that is the key to, like, all of sales, I think. I don't think, I know.

Megan: And the beautiful thing is because, once again, it's a benevolent bait-and-switch which is one of my favorite terms ever, is, like, it also allows you to build such trust with yourself and with your business, and with you as someone who's creating something, because if you have that deep conviction, you know that you're going to be in it for the long hall. It's not like a flash in the pan.

Simone: Exactly.

Megan: Especially ADHD brains. And we have all these stories that, like, we don't follow through. We don't finish things. So the idea that you can do that when you're aligned with something at a bone-deep level just entirely abolishes ideas that you aren't someone who follows through. And that's because of that, like, ah, I know this is something the world needs 100 percent.

Simone: And so many people ask me, can I start a group program if I haven't booked out my one-on-one coaching practice? Can I? Is this good timing for this and that? And, like, I literally I don't care about any of those things, but oftentimes what does happen is that people -- they are unable to sell their one-on-one practices, and they want to start a group because they think it will make it easier to sell. They think oh, it will be more fun. It will be easier to sell.

So then what that tells me is that what's swaying you, like, I know you believe in your program, I know you believe in this offer, I know you think it's great, but you're chasing success. You're chasing the ease of selling rather than operating from this bone deep conviction as you said, like, this

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is so -- this needs to exist in the world so badly that even if it's the hardest thing in the world to sell, it's worth it. I'm going to figure it out no matter what it takes. Like, if you have that, I know you're going to succeed. I don't care about anything else. I don't care what you've already done or I don't care what else. I don't fucking care. Right?

And if you don't have that, that's not a problem. When you don't have that, all that means is that you're on your way to arriving at bone-deep conviction about whatever it's going to be. Right? You have to -- I would love to know your take on this, Meg. I feel like the bone-deep conviction is something that you have to earn.

Megan: Yeah, for sure. I think I mentioned this already, like, I spent, like, a good year and a half give or take, you know, kind of going back and forth about, like, what my niche was, and I don't need a niche, and it's fine, but I didn't really let myself not care about having a niche. I didn't really go all the way there. I was not in 100 percent belief. So the fact that I had to, like, get my hands really messy and dirty to, like, what do I talk about, how do I talk about this? How do I explain this in five hundred different ways? That was the thing that allowed me to essentially be, like, oh, I know what I'm explaining.

I'm explaining how to, like, love the shit out of the fact that your brain and your body work differently. So it's a difference between, like, spending forever to try to nail down the perfect thing to say versus I'm willing to say it wrong and messy and be criticized and have it be imperfect and be awkward five hundred times to figure out how to say it better. Right?

Megan: Yeah, because you have to do that even to find the bone-deep conviction, and then you need to do it a million more times with your group, especially because you're selling it to more people, and you're often selling a lot through your copy.

Simone: Yeah, you totally are.

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Megan: Yeah, 100 percent sell through copy. That requires a lot of experimentation and, like, getting really good at explaining things in a million different ways and trying it out.

Simone: Which only comes from experimentation, and the willingness to fail over and over again. Which is not actually failure, but your brain is going to tell you it's failure.

Megan: And this is why the garbage press challenge is so brilliant because it, like, gets you to, like, experiment a bunch of times and figure out what works. That's in addition to, like, getting you past the, you know, I need to show up and be a perfect human thing. But, like, the experimentation is so crucial.

Simone: When I say you have to earn, like, the bone-deep conviction, it's not something you figure out overnight because you coached yourself or because you had the right revelation. When I say you have to earn it, I do not mean, like, in the sense of, like, you have to be good enough to earn it. That's not what it's about. What I mean is you have to earn it, like, with your willingness to trust yourself through all of the different iterations. Like, trust yourself through all the courageous action that you take when you feel uncertain, when you feel afraid, when you feel like you look like an ass, like, all these things.

And let the pile of failures and imperfections pile up in public so that it's almost like your conviction has to get tested for it to get hardened for it to deepen, and then what you -- I'm, like, mixing a whole bunch of metaphors, but the bone-deep conviction you get at the end, it's almost like that pearl at the end of that process. You know?

Megan: One of the metaphors I use a lot in my coaching is, like, the setting of your life essentially, like, are you playing on hard mode? Difficult mode? And this reminds me of essentially, like, when you have a game level and you have a boss fight at the end. This is in a lot of ways, like, to get good at

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something and advance to the next level, you have to do the boss fight, and the boss fight is usually harder, it requires you to test your skills, you're probably going to die.

Simone: You die a bunch of times.

Megan: Exactly. But you're so much better when you hit the next level, because that's the thing, like, the boss tests your skill, and if you aren't ready for the next level, you aren't ready for the next level. It doesn't mean anything, it just means, like, your skills need to develop a little bit more. Your skill is built through experimentation and failure over and over again.

SIMONE: I feel like this was a pretty comprehensive masterclass on how to conceive of and develop and sell a group program successfully with a nonlinear, nontypical brain. What do you think?

Megan: 100 percent. The one thing I would add is, like, there is no right way to do this. Like, your group program can have anything you want in it. As long as it's aligned with your unique genius, the things that you bring to the world, it's gonna sell like cupcakes.

Simone: It could literally be, like, hey, here's a message board, we're going to talk in it.

Megan: Or coaching calls a couple times a month. It could be let's meet and draw together once a month.

Simone: It could be anything. Or it could be, you know, like, when you come into Joyful Marketing, mine does have, you know, a very linear structure, I mean, the way people play with it is very unlinear, but I have workbooks, I have modules, and again, we're not, like, anti-those things, but it has to serve the energy of your thing, and it's never going to be the main thing that's going to sell your program.

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So for me that was what was right for me in that container at that time, and it still is. And, you know, for the mystery room, what's right is it's just wide open, we're going to find out together. I would so love, it would just be all my dreams came true, if you, instead of looking to me or another expert for answers, if you went inside and allowed the kimchi inside to marinate and ferment, and felt into what would feel joyful for me? What would feel aligned for me? If I'm not sure, you know what? I'm ready to go try 100 different things and have 97 of them fail so I can figure it out. If you downloaded that quality of trust in yourself, that would be all my dreams come true as your coach.

Megan: Oh, I love that so much.

Simone: Yeah.

Megan: Especially because that's -- you are going to be so much happier being the steward of this container if it's something that, like, brings you joy. Because a lot of groups are going to go on for a period of time that is longer than, you know, a week.

Simone: Yeah.

Megan: Which means, like, you need to love it, too.

Simone: You need to love it first and foremost.

Megan: Yup. Yup. Exactly. And you finding something that's aligned with your playful, brilliant mind, is gonna be the thing that makes your program unique, it's gonna be the things that attracts people, and it doesn't have to look like anyone else's. It can have whatever structure. The most structure, least structure, it doesn't matter, as long as it comes from how you want to show up in the world. And play with it. You get to have a lot of fun thinking about how to run a group. It's something that you can really, really play with.

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Simone: Yeah, it's, like, infinite creativity.

Megan: Oh, infinite creativity. You can do so many different things. And I'm so excited for, like, all of the whacky ideas that I have. One of the things that I'm doing, for example, because I want to, not because I think it will cause it to sell, it's just me, is that everyone who joins before the doors open will get a special badge, which is a hipster sheep. And, like, it's hilarious, and it makes me laugh. And that's the only reason I'm doing it. It's because they got in the playground before it was cool.

Simone: I think one of my favorite things about having a business that's very profitable is that I'm always, like, the only reason I'm making this business investment is because I get a kick out of it. The only reason I'm doing this for my clients is because it tickles me. The end.

Megan: Yeah, exactly. And you get to have fun like that. And that's actually one of the things that will attract people to you, is if you do things like that just because that's you.

Simone: So if you are amazed by Meg's brilliance and want to be one of the early members of Black Sheep Playground, give us a pitch. Who should come join you? Why should they come join you?

Megan: They should come join me because it is going to be one of the most subversive groups on the planet for people who have neurodivergent brains. We're going to do things like entirely burn to the ground the idea that there's a right way to live your life and structure your business. In fact, it's a lot of stuff that we've talked about.

And you'll get to learn how to thrive and build a business and work in a way that's 100 percent matched to your unique rhythms, your unique way of being, so rather than having a template for a life that doesn't match yours, you're going to create your template from scratch. And boy is it a lot of fun

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when you can do everything 100 percent aligned with your unique body and brain.

Simone: So good. So good. Okay, you guys you're so lucky to know about this program so early on. By the time you listen to this, the program's going to be open, and I'm going to leave all the links in the show notes. Meg, a pleasure, as always.

Megan: As always.

Simone: All right, my friends, talk to you next time. Bye!

Hey, if you want a shot of fresh inspiration and actionable tips to improve your marketing every single week in your inbox, you better get on my e-mail list. Sign up to receive my free e-book called 20 Unsolicited Copy Tips. It's been known to get people to come out of the woodwork and ask to work with you. So get on that link in the show notes, and I'll see you in your inbox next time.