

Ep #204: When to Start Paid Ads and How to Not Fuck Them Up

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With Your Host

Simone Grace Seol

[Joyful Marketing](#) with 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.

Hello. For the first time ever, in the history of my podcast, we're going to talk about ads. I'm going to tell you all of my unvarnished, unfiltered rude opinions on ads. And, I want to give you some guidance as to when it's not the right time to start ads, when is the right time to start ads, and some amazing tips that I have for getting the most out of your buck. So, let's go.

Like I said, I have controversial opinions about ads. Here they go. If you are easily offended, you might not want to listen to this part. I honestly think that 80% of people who are spending money on ads are wasting their money, 100%. It might even be higher; it might even be 90% of people who are spending money on ads.

I think you have no business running ads if you're still trying to figure out how to generate consistent income. Because that means you haven't figured out how to speak to your people in a way that takes them from finding out who you are, all the way to buying from you. And if you haven't figured that out, and you're paying money for ads to figure out how to convert people, you are literally flushing money down the drain.

I think you should pay for ads after you've already figured out how to find people, how to convert people. So, that you can find more people to convert and refine your way for converting them faster. Whoa, okay, that was a lot, more on that later; I promise I'll get into that.

But I think the reason that ads, for so many people, it just amounts to them flushing money down the drain over and over. It breaks my heart. It's because often, ads are sold as a magical elixir. Is that how you pronounce

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that word? Elixir, not elixier. What? I've never said that word out loud before; I just read it. Ads are sold as the magic elixir that they're not.

I think, largely, the way people commonly think about ads can be divided into two camps. One, people either think that ads are a total gamble, throwing spaghetti on the wall. That takes an insane amount of work to make it turn a decent return on investment. And of course, those people tend not to rely on and they don't tend to not work on ads, they don't try them.

And the second camp, is people who think that ads are going to be the thing that's going to magically save them. They think ads are a must. It's free money. I just throw money into ads, and it gives me this return. It's the easiest way, it's the way, to grow my audience, to get more customers.

I think the truth about ads is that it's neither of these things. And I think it's literally so unethical that ads are sold as if they're free money, as if it's a vending machine. It's so incredibly not true. And, anyone who actually has success with ads knows that.

I have so many friends... I'm a multiple seven figure earner. I have friends, so many friends, who are multiple six figure earners, seven figure earners; we all use ads. And, none of us think that ads are an easy way to make money. None of us thinks that ads are like a vending machine, you put a coin in and more and more coins fall out. None of us think that.

All of us have a much more nuanced view of ads. And all of us agree that it takes a ton of ongoing thoughtfulness and work, and trial and error. As well as, a baseline of a healthy and cash positive business to make ads work. It doesn't mean don't do them, but that's what it takes.

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The whole vending machine sort of idea is incredibly misleading, it is false. Anyone who's trying to peddle that view of ads is probably just trying to sell you on their services. But unfortunately, because so many people peddle that view, a lot of people who do end up paying for ads tend to be from the second camp of people, unfortunately. Who think, who are relying on ads to do something that ads aren't designed to do.

A lot of coaches expect ads to solve problems that they're not designed to solve. They have an inflated sense of possibility about what ads can do for them. And they keep pouring money down the drain believing that the next tweak; the next thing we're going to try, the next funnel, the next opt in, the next whatever, is going to be the thing that finally opens the floodgates of clients and cash. And that, literally it makes my heart hurt so much. I cannot watch it.

So, that's why this podcast, if you can't tell, it's been a long time coming. So, here are my controversial opinions. Again, I don't think you're ready to start ads if you think ads are going to save you. If you're coming at it from that mindset, that in itself, is a sign that you're not ready.

Or, you can do it. You can be like, "Fuck, whatever Simone thinks, you know, means is readiness for me." But I think there's a high likelihood that you're going to spend a ton of money for very little gain. I think it's a sign that you're not ready to do ads.

You're not ready to get a high return on investment on your ads, or break even with ads, if you're coming at it from a place of having hopes that ads are going to be the thing that gets you out of a sales limbo. Like ads are going to be the thing that saves you from whatever problem that you don't want to have.

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Because here's the brutal truth: What gets you out of a sales limbo, is selling better. Figure out where the problems are in your selling, and fix those problems; sell better. That's what gets you out of a sales limbo, not throwing money into ads.

The whole looking for a magic ticket energy... That whole, "If I just invest enough money into this, it's going to generate more of a return." That's the fastest way to part with a fuck ton of money.

And the internet is littered with people, with those stories, who are now... It actually boggles my mind how much money people spend on ads, while getting no return and having very little sort of solid direction, in terms of where they're going. It's four figures, five figures, six figures a year that people are spending on ads, where they're getting no return: it's crazy to me.

I don't think you're ready for ads, unless you have a ton of cash lying around that you're totally comfortable spending, on just figuring stuff out. If you're pressed for cash, if your business profitability is tenuous, from month to month, I absolutely, categorically believe that you should not be spending money on ads. So, unless you're making a decent amount of money consistently, don't do it.

Here's why: If you are making a decent amount of money consistently, that means you know who you are, as a coach; you're solid. And, not like you came up with a mission statement and you feel amazing, and you know, in your heart and in your intuition, that you're meant to do this work. That's not what I mean by 'you know who you are, as a coach.'

I mean, you have gone out there, you have worked with clients, you have failed, you have iterated. You've arrived at a sense of who you are through trial and error, through encountering actual client work, through failing. That

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is what I mean. You have a body of data and a body of experience that backs up the solidity of, “This is who I am as a coach.” Not like, “I had an intuitive hit.”

Making a decent amount of money consistently means that you have arrived there. And that means you know who your people are. Again, not in an intuitive... I mean, not to knock intuition, but there's a difference between, “I just feel like these are the people that I'm meant to serve,” versus, “I have literally, served this many people, through trial and error.” There's a difference,

And if you have all that experience, you also know from experience, from data, what makes the move. Numbers always tell the truth. Numbers don't tell the whole truth, but they do speak an important truth. When you've dialed in who you are energetically, through trial and error. And you know how to draw your people to you, through trial and error. And you know how to get people from ‘liking’ you to clicking ‘buy’, through trial and error, because you figured it out. You will have the numbers to show for it.

If you're not sure, you can find out by trying different ways of marketing and selling. That's how you figure out how to sell better. And, paying for ads is like spending money to do experiments that you can do for free. Why would you do that? When you can literally, do any experiment and get immediate results, for free, every single day with the audience you already have.

You do not need a large audience. If you have 200 followers on Instagram® or whatever, or if you have 50 people on your email list, you better trust that those people are giving you feedback. If you're getting nothing, that is the feedback that you're getting; nothing is information.

So, what do you do to go from zero response to two responses? What do you do to go from two responses to six responses? That's what you need

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to figure out. There are always enough people around you, for you to conduct very high-quality experiments. Don't spend money to figure it out if you don't have to, if you don't have a ton of cash lying around, which most of us don't.

Do the *garbage post challenge*. You want to know what it's like to actually show up for your people? And actually gather data? And actually see, in real time, how people respond to you? And, what works and what doesn't, outside of your other theories and thoughts in your head? Have your ideas actually meet real life? Do the *garbage post challenge*.

If you don't know what that is, you got to get on that. It's a challenge that I explained; entirely for free, you can learn about the whole thing for free and get started today. It's like an internet sensation, right now, at this point, okay? If you search for #GPC, which stands for garbage post challenge. Or even, #garbagepostchallenge.

There are so many people out there doing it and recommending it to all their friends, because it's gonna change your life. It's going to change the way you show up. It's going to change the way your audience responds to you.

You can learn all about it in this exact podcast, Episode 160. So, literally, I would pause this episode and go listen to that;160, right now. If you haven't, do the *garbage post challenge*. If you haven't done that yet, and you want to do ads, eventually, this is literally going to be the highest ROI thing you can do for yourself.

So, and many of you listening have done the *garbage post challenge*, or you're still doing it. And, like I always say, *garbage post challenge* is not for beginners. I am always doing the *garbage post challenge*. The *garbage post challenge* is a way of life; it's a spiritual practice.

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So, let's say you are in the practice of it, and you are getting people to notice you and come towards you. Keep doing the *garbage post challenge*. If you keep doing it, you're going to collect data on like; oh, this is what works to get people coming towards me, even if I have a small audience. This is what I thought made people want to buy, but this is the thing that actually makes people want to buy.

You're gonna gather all this data. But please, don't let your brain tell you that your audience is too small. If you get stuck on thinking that your audience is too small, and you need a bigger one, and you have to pay to get a bigger audience, I'm going to ask you this very confronting question, which is; is there someone in your life, right now, that could benefit from life coaching? From the coaching that you offer? Can you think of somebody, right now, that you know, that's in your sphere, that's in your life?

If so, have they asked you to coach them yet? Do they think of you as the person they want to hire? If not, why? Have they asked to work with you yet? Why? If there's someone in your life who could benefit from coaching, why aren't they benefiting from your coaching? What are all the thoughts that are happening? What are all the reasons that your brain thinks as to why that's happening? That is what you have to solve for, before you have a bigger audience.

If you're not engaging your existing audience effectively, adding more people to your audience isn't going to accomplish shit. Here's the best analogy I can think of actually: If you want to be, let's say you want to be a chef-owner of a successful restaurant. You want to have your own restaurant and have people come, have it be successful.

You can either buy a restaurant and spend money on ads to get people into your restaurant, while you actually have no idea how to cook. Or, you learn how to cook from a book but you're not that good at it. You're spending

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money to get people to step inside your store, into your restaurant, and say yes or no to your food, while you're figuring out the fundamentals of cooking.

So, that people are coming into your restaurant while you're while you're bumbling your way through. Trying to cook an omelet properly or not burn a burger. Do you want to do that? You can do that. But it's an enormously expensive way to do things.

Or, you can go to cooking school, and you can work in an actual restaurant for a while and hone your chops. Learn how to be a great cook, master the fundamentals of cooking long enough to be able to figure out even what kind of chef you are. You go work in actual restaurant kitchen, learn how the industry works, learn how customers behave, learn how to make people happy.

Learn the ins and outs of successful restaurant operations. And, you do that until you have ideas, based on your actual experience, an actual reality of what is going to work, once you open your own restaurant.

That is... it's not a perfect analogy. But it's a good analogy for how much you can get by doing the *garbage post challenge*, and really utilizing the audience that you do have, to figure out what works; what doesn't, who you are and who your people are.

When you have done all of that, and you spend the money to open your own restaurant and get customers in, your money is going to give you such a higher return on investment. I'm not giving you rules. I'm not saying, "You are not supposed to do this. That's bad, if you do this." I'm just saying, I'm just telling you, what is likely to generate a high return on investment, versus what's likely to generate a low return on investment, or even risk you losing money.

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I want you to get a big bang for your buck; that is all I want. I'm not in the business of giving you rules. I'm in the business of advising you about what I think is going to help you to get a bigger bang for your buck. So, what I'm saying is please, if you use the restaurant analogy, please be the person, who has a dream of 'I want a successful restaurant,' and puts in the work to be a good cook, to accumulate real world experience with the with resources they already have.

And the way you do that for your business is going to be showing up, creating connections with people who are already there, giving them value, experiment with 100 million different ways to give value through the *garbage post challenge*. Show up as yourself, experiment with a million ways to be yourself, all of that. There's so much work that you can learn from, before you start to spend cash.

So, after I've been a huge bummer telling you what not to do, let me tell you what to do. Let's say, you're like, "Okay, Simone, I listened to this episode. I did all the work. And now, I'm coming back to see what I should do." Or, if you already have done the work, and you're eager to make your ads better or get a higher return, here is my advice. Here's actually, my best advice about ads.

In my opinion, the best and the highest use of ads, is to spark the beginning of an aligned relationship. I want you to think of ads as a tool for relationship building. That is a very big contrast to how a lot of people present ads. Which is, ads are a vending machine; put coins in and customers fall out. That is not how it works. That is not how I encourage you to think about it.

Ads are not a vending machine; ads are a tool for relationship building. And I think, even better as long-term relationship building. Ads are the entryway

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to you having and being able to nurture and build very high-quality business relationships, that will last you a long time.

Imagine going on the most mind-blowingly, amazing first date, a blind date. That's what a good ad should feel like to a client. You meet somebody spontaneously, randomly, or you got set up with somebody, and you're like, "Holy wow! Where has that person been all of my life?" That is how you want your people to feel when they first encounter your ad.

Let's say you had an amazing first date. It's not that you already know everything about them. It's not like you're ready to marry them right that second, but you're just so excited to have found them, and you know there's an alignment there that makes you feel all buzzy. And, you can't wait to see what's next. And whatever they propose next, you're probably going to be like hell yeah.

Want to go see a movie? Yes. Count me. Want to go to a gallery? Yes. Want to go to the amusement park? Yes. Dinner? Yes. Creating that state of making them feel like, "Oh my god, this is such a yes. That whatever is next, that this person wants to propose to me, I'm in." That is what you want to accomplish with ads.

Your job, in creating an ad, is to create the clearest, the juiciest beginning of a relationship. I truly want to invite you to pause and think about this. What changes when you see ads as a relationship building tool? When you stop seeing it as a short-term game, short-term extraction game? Which is how so many people approach this.

How can you get these people to convert the fastest? That is the short-term extraction game. What if we didn't do that, but we saw ads as a way to meet and cultivate relationships, with people who are going to get to know

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you and trust you, and refer you and buy from you, year after year after year?

I'd even ask; what changes, when you think of doing ads to meet people that you would want to have relationships with 10 years from now? Twenty years from now? So few of us, in online entrepreneurship, think about these long-term relationships. And I think you can really distinguish yourself; you can really do your business so much good, by thinking about high-quality long-term relationships.

And that's why we don't treat customers, "leads," whatever, like they're fish responding to bait, and if we can just set up the bait, they're just gonna bite. That's why we don't think of them like that. That's why we don't treat them transactionally. Scheming to get the fastest dollar out of them, dazzling with charm and hype until they're just distracted enough, just pumped full of adrenaline enough, dopamine enough, to hit that 'buy' button.

That is the predominant culture of ads that is created by short-term relationship thinking. I think it fucking sucks. I want to create a culture

of creating amazing, long-term, authentic, aligned relationships. Are you getting chills? Because I'm getting chills. I get chills from my own thoughts. I think it's really good, don't you?

Okay, so let's talk. You're like, "Simone, that sounds fucking amazing. I'm in. So, how do I actually do that? How do I give them that amazing first step?" Let me tell you, my favorite way, which I am doing in my own ads, is to give people, whatever you're offering in the ads, give people a juicy, hot, sexy, amazing transformation for free.

Your first contact with people who sign up for your thing, through your ads, should be a wow experience. Not like in a hypey way, but in a way where

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you're showing up with such authenticity, you're showing up with so much of yourself, and so much trust in them. And you're providing such high-quality value and presence, that they're like, "Who is this person? I cannot... Whoa, I'm so glad I found them."

And whatever you're offering, if it's an opt-in, freebie, whatever, you want them to think, "I can't believe this is free. I can't believe this is only 8 bucks," whatever it is. Oh, and speaking of which, please, for the love of all things holy, do not sell something that's \$1,000 or \$5,000 in your ad to a cold audience. That's like asking people to marry you on the first date.

Sometimes people marry each other on the first date, but the vast majority don't. Make it easy for them to say yes. In dating analogies, you know they're my favorite, a coffee. It's easy to say yes to a coffee. A little walk in the park, it's easy. Even a dinner, that's easy to say yes. "Hey, do you want to go on a two-week long trip with me?" Make it easy for them; that's too hard, that's too much, even if they think you're really cool.

So, remember that your ad is going to set a tone for how the rest of your relationship is going to unfold. Make sure you make a great impression based on who you truly are, and what it's really like to work with you and be in your presence. Does your ad feel like what it's like to actually spend time with you? What it's like to get to know you?

If not, then it's incongruent; it's not going to work. Make sure you give them a non-transactional impression. Make sure you give them an ad that feels like an invitation into something that feels super aligned for them.

So, my ad, sort of opt-in thingy is, I invite people to receive an email sequence from me. And all those emails are, by the way, you can totally steal this idea if you want. But all those emails I garnered from tracking

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some of my highest engagement, highest response pieces of writing that I ever wrote.

So, I looked at some... I've been writing on the internet for fucking years, and I just gathered some pieces of writing that were the most, almost controversial, that were the most powerful, that made people go; whoa, this is very thought provoking. I didn't try to make everybody like me with those posts. It's like, I wanted to be so clear about who I am that I wanted to repel all the wrong people, right?

So, I'm sharing my controversial ideas. I'm sharing all the places where I go against the industry mainstream. Those are my email sequences. So, my goal with them, in my own thoughts is, by the time you get through the email sequence, to the end of it, you either hate me and you're like, "This does not resonate with me. This is not my person. I do not relate to this, at all." Or, she's too whatever. She curses too much, etc.

Or, you're like, "I want to marry this person. Where has Simone been all my life? Fuck yes, this is what I've been waiting to read all of my life." There is no in between. I either want you to never want to see anything of mine again, because it's so wrong for you. Or, I want you to love me completely, forever.

So, that was my intention with my ad sequence. When people get into my ad sequence, indeed, that's exactly what happens. People are like, fuck no, or they're like, fuck yes. And it's not just another blah, blah, blah, freebie.

My stance is here. Here's who I am. Get to know me, and either be a true yes or a true no. And if it's a true no, then best of wishes. Go on your way. And if it's a true yes, then yes. Let us begin an amazing long-term relationship.

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I mean, I don't say that, that would be creepy. But I welcome them into my world, into the wonderful world of Simone. That is how I approach it, and feel 100% free to steal this idea. I mean, not like it's an original idea. I'm sure somebody else is doing it out there, as well.

So, that actually, I think it's a really good tip: Not leading with, in your ads, not leading with something that's like very nice and valuable, in a conventional way. But leading with something that is some of your most controversial material.

Not controversial for the sake of being sensationalist, but in terms of being a clear differentiator, that's going to divide people into; yes, I've been waiting for someone to say this. Versus oh, hell no. This is not... I don't agree with this. This is not for me, this is not...

What you offer through your ad should induce a very clear yes or no response, in my opinion. Because that is the best beginning of an aligned relationship. Even in romantic relationships, on first dates, your job isn't to be as appealing to as many people as possible. You want to cut through the noise, you want to cut through the chaff, to find someone who's a true match for who you really are.

And so, if you end up being not the right fit for a lot of people on the first date, that's a good thing. All that means is that you actually are being yourself, and you're putting yourself on the fastest path towards finding someone who is aligned. So don't be wishy-washy, lukewarm, nice, polite. It's like, do you have controversial opinions? Try leading with that in your ads? Do you have approaches, philosophies, methods that set you apart from the mainstream, which a lot of people disagree with? Fantastic, put that in your ads. That's going to save you so much money, I'm telling you.

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So, there's a difference between being sensationalist and being very, lovingly clear and confident in who you are, and in your own energetic frequency. That's what I recommend.

Another tip that I have for ads is, if you have an offer, that's sort of a significant investment, don't make your offer the focus. A lot of people do this and it breaks my heart because I know they're just pouring money down the drain, because it's not working.

Don't have an ad where you're just describing the offer to a cold audience. Do not spend precious pixels explaining what the offer is, to somebody who doesn't even know who you are. Make it your goal to build trust, to build that 'I like this person, I trust this person.' Build that relationship, build that rapport, that should be the function of the first ad.

If they trust you, they're not going to need an elaborate explanation to buy whatever you've got. Once the trust is there, they are going to come knocking and be like, "Hey, what are you offering? Because I want to buy it. Because I trust you. I don't need a million details."

The worst ads, and the worst in terms of efficacy is: Okay, let me tell you about my three-week course. And, it comes with these bonuses and blah, blah, blah.

Nobody cares. Why would you listen to someone talk about that when you don't even know who they are? So, I'm not saying don't make an offer. Make an offer, for fucking sure. But I just want you to know that a strategically brilliant offer with a perfect copy, that's not what sells. What sells is trust.

When they can tell that you're not bullshitting them, you're not putting on a marketing persona that they see 70 billion of, every day when they scroll,

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they see all these ads and they all sound the fucking same. And everybody can tell that when a marketing persona is talking to them, as opposed to human being.

When they can tell that you really are here to serve them, to establish a human relationship with them. When they can tell that you're not afraid to show up and really be yourself, and be a version of yourself that goes beyond the blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. How powerful is that?

Establish trust, first. Make it an aim to give them an amazing first date experience, with who you are, with the business that you have, before you pummel them with details about this and this and that. Don't sell the offer. Sell the relationship with you.

All right, my friends. I'm sorry, that was like a masterclass in ads, and in unfucking ads. I hope that was helpful. Let me know. Give me, I don't know, tag me, whatever social media. If you have thoughts about this, let me know. All right. I'll talk to you later. 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 email 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.