

Ep #225: The Cost and Rewards of Following Your Enchantment
with Sunny Smith, MD

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 friends, the conversation I want to share with you today, is with my dear, dear friend, Sunny Smith, who is a physician, coach, and a pioneering leader in the medical community. And this conversation is actually a follow-up to a different conversation that I published almost two years ago on this podcast, Episode 146, if you want to look it up. I titled it "The Metaphysics of a Seven-Figure Business"; which we both run.

And in that episode, Sunny shared about how she was talking to the writer, Elizabeth Gilbert, one of my favorites, who gave Sunny this prompt that changed everything. And that prompt is, "What would enchantment do?" And since then, Sunny has used that question as a compass for her business and her life.

As a result, everything changed. And you know, being a friend of Sunny's, and being a beneficiary of all of this wonderfulness, I have also taken the question into my own life and use it as a compass. And now, I can't believe it, but that was two years ago, and lots of things have happened since. We've been chasing our enlightenment, what's happened? I thought it'd be a good time to give you an update.

And you know, I was checking in with Sunny and we both realized, actually, following the path of enchantment is actually a lot more uncomfortable and at times even painful. We wanted to talk about all that, about the realities of it, and also the gifts that came from that. We have been on sort of parallel paths of business growth.

We also talk about how neither of us decided to ever grow up and have to become serious business women. We talk about all the lies we tell

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ourselves to get off of the track of enchantment. And the one question that I ask myself and my clients, that cuts through all the lies and helps us to get back on it. We also talk about how to be gracious and compassionate with ourselves, as we go through all the seasons of life and grow and evolve.

I gotta tell you, we recorded this episode a few months ago, last fall, actually. And as I'm about to publish it, I was listening to it again, before. And it brought me so much wisdom and healing that I needed, like right now. And so, enjoy the conversation. We're going to jump right in the middle of it.

Simone Seol: We've been talking about the cost of following your enchantment. Because, believe it or not, following your enchantment does not always feel enchanted. Sometimes, it's very difficult decisions. Sometimes, it's very painful emotions. Sometimes, it's letting some old ways of being die. Sometimes, it's breaking up with people who are dear to us.

Breaking up with ideas, institutions, ways of being, that maybe at one time defined us, that kept us safe. Or, we thought kept us safe for a long time. And, it sometimes means you give up the certainty of incoming money. And you don't know what's coming in its place, and you do it anyway. Because you know one thing, which is the thing that you need to let go of, was not bringing you enchantment. Even though it made sense in 100 logical ways.

I feel kind of weird saying this, because I feel like this is probably not relatable for most people. But like, think about the idea of breaking up with a seven-figure business model. Something that was consistently bringing you seven-figures of income.

Not knowing what's going to replace it and saying, "Actually, I'm just gonna let this go for now," when there are people counting on you, not just clients, employees, family members. Whole community of people looking to you, and you're like; yeah, I don't know what's next.

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Sunny and I both have done forms of that recently, more than once. And we've kind of been each other's support. At least, she's been my support through some of those decisions. I wanted to bring her back to talk about it, because following your enchantment does not always feel enchanting.

But that doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. Because the other side of it, is that we get to see our businesses unfold, and our sacred purpose in the world unfold, in the most magical ways. So, what do you got to say about that, Sunny Smith, MD?

Sunny: Oh my gosh, so much, so much. So much wisdom, so much reflection, so much of our shared journey. I mean I would say what, the last time that I was on here, I really was feeling incredibly enchanted. I was feeling... Business was absolutely a magical container, in which I can make anything come true.

Really, like I started, you know, just dreaming way outside of the box. It was, I believe, around the time the pandemic had started. And so, I wasn't able to do a lot of things that I used to do in person, that were meaningful to me and my clients. And so, I just started reaching out and doing these, like, shoot-for-the-moon types of things. And, they were all coming true.

We had the most amazing guests that I could ever dream of having conversations with: Liz Gilbert, Martha Beck, Jill Bolte Taylor. Stuff like that. It was absolutely enchanting. Byron Katie. Like, anyone that I was just like, I would love to talk to this person. A business made container, where I could actually have real conversations with those people. I mean, it was incredible.

We called it Enchantment, because I had just done this workshop, two Saturdays in a row with Liz Gilbert. She had an exercise where; when was the last time you were in touch with enchantment? And so, I thought about when it was. It was a little place on the beach, with my family. And so, I went back.

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And that's actually, where you talked to me for the first time. So, this sort of enchantment theme had sort of brought us together, following our enchantment.

And what's so funny, is that we recorded it way before it aired because you were pregnant. And so, first of all, I just want to offer to people that I thought I sounded, it sounded, like crazy town. I know it's inappropriate to use that word. I thought it maybe sounded off the wall. And so, I didn't even think about it.

But after maybe six, nine months or something passed and it hadn't come out, I was like, literally, my brain was offering the story at some point, like, oh, maybe that really was too off the wall. Maybe she's never gonna air it. And then, I had emailed, I think Julie, or whoever your person was, and she was like; oh, no, it's just scheduled because she's on leave. And so, it's gonna come out at some certain time.

So, what's hilarious, is by the time it came out, I was no longer feeling that my business was a magical container, where anything could come true. And so, it was fascinating, and almost torturous to my soul in a way, to listen to how full of joy and glee I was when we had talked six months ago.

Because, you know, we had, at that point, made... I think around the time that I had talked to you, we'd made \$1.5 or \$2 million. And you and I have been on very similar business paths and journeys, in terms of our income and our growth; different people, different audiences, but similar messages about humanity and compassion. And, our income increased sort of around the same time.

And so, when my business got to \$3 million, is sort of when I started feeling really miserable, fascinatingly. I learned I could put anything I wanted in its results line, but I learned very well that the results do not create your feelings. Imagine that. The circumstances and the facts of your life can be amazing...

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And we have this arrival fallacy in business. I think it's very important that we all start talking about this. Because people think once you hit a certain something, you're going to be happy. As if that result can create your happiness.

And so, for us in med school, it was like, you know, wait till you become a resident. Or, you know, when you're done with med school, and once you become an attending, and once you become practice partner, whatever, you'll be happy. And so, in business I feel like there's a very similar thing. That we're sold a bill of goods, just like we are in med school. We're sold a bill of goods.

So, when you become a doctor, you'll be happy. And you get there, and you're freaking miserable. Why? And so, once I got to multimillion dollars and this big staff, and an org chart, and a formal CLO with EOS training, doing traction inside my business like....

Simone: Oh, my insides are just shriveling up at those words.

Sunny: I know! When it was me and one OBM, and a bunch of amazing coaches who I love and adore, many of whom are my former clients, and are absolutely phenomenal. I love my people! You know that, right? I just love and adore and connect with my people. And when it was simple like that, I just loved it so much. It was a magical container.

This is a cautionary tale for people, but it's about getting a little off-course and listening to what other people were telling you to do. I remember specifically, like being outside the airport in Puerto Rico. Outside some like T-shirt shop where airplanes were going overhead, and I was talking to you.

I was like, "So I have this corporation now. I have a CLO. I have an org chart." I have all of these people and all these things in there. I did it all the way that people had said that I should, and it just was feeling so heavy.

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It was feeling very heavy because they wanted to meet with me. They were sort of telling me, not intentionally, not in a mean way, but that I was doing things wrong.

You know, that my last minute-ness, my improvising, my magical silliness, my long calls, my way of being that got me to a multimillion dollar business was not the way it was supposed to be. And, that was very tortuous to my soul. And, it just kept getting heavier and heavier.

So anyway, you know, we had hiring, firing, hiring, firing. And like, my whole life, instead of connecting with the magic of coaching and the humans and what we can believe in and what we can do, my time as the CEO was becoming consumed with lawyers, accountants, CPAs, CFOs, HR people. Meetings that had to be very regimented, and a certain number of minutes. I was just like, if this is what it's gonna be like, I just want to...

Honestly, I was in master coach training at the time, and Corinne Crabtree was the person... If people know her, she's so kind and so amazing, and she has a very successful eight-figure business. I was meeting with her weekly and she was saying, you know, "Girl, you're right where you're supposed to be. This is what it feels like. This is me, a couple years ago. This is what it feels like. This is the growing pain of being in this space. It's learning how to do this in the way that feels good to you."

So, I was telling her though, I wasn't believing her. I was like, "It feels so heavy. I'm gonna throw my laptop out the window, into the ocean. And I'm gonna get on a boat. And I'm gonna sail into the sea. Sail away, I'm just gonna sail away." And she was like, "Sunny, you're just gonna complain about the waves, and the weather, and the rain." She's like, "You're the one making it hard. Nothing's going to be better on the boat."

Simone: You're the one complaining about the waves... She has this fabulous southern twang.

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Sunny: Yes, yeah. So, she was hilarious and the perfect person to be delivered to me. Because I believe, very much, the universe delivers to you what you need when you need it, right? And so, I think it's so important this like feeling, this intuition, this inner knowing. And your feelings are like your compass and your guide, or your traffic light, or whatever. And my feelings were not in the right place.

And so, I started talking to... Because I thought I had to concentrate more, I had thought I had to focus more. And so, I started seeing my psychiatrists more. And I'm like; you have to help me concentrate. For the first time in my life, I tried ADD drugs, for a very short period of time. Not stimulants, but just, you know, like things that were supposed to help me focus. And, it was just making me worse. All my neural chemicals were not...

I'm like, this is just not good. I'm trying to be someone I'm not. Why am I doing this? The reason that I sort of did my own business, is so I could do things on my own terms, and lead my own way, and lead from the outside. Because I tried leading from inside institutions for a long, long time. It was very successful in some ways, but you know, you bumped up against things that aren't the way you want to do it.

So, why was I recreating that in my own business? Anyway, I'm getting a little off track, it seems. Because people think that, again, if you're like working on finding your first 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10 clients, you think, "Oh, well, when I get to six figures, or multiple six figures, or seven figures, that's when I'm going to be happy."

And it's like, listen, you just keep being you. You keep leaning into what lights you up. And keep realigning and course-correcting, over and over and over, to stay on track with that. Because I got there, and by the time your enchantment episode came out, that ended up labeled metaphysics of a seven figure business, I was a multi seven-figure business. And I was not feeling enchanted.

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You and I are always talking behind scenes and messaging each other, and all this stuff. And so, at some point you told me, I remember because it was the end of the year, and we had messaged each other and we were like, in the exact same place in our businesses.

And, you were so happy. You were saying like, "It's so light. I'm so lit up. This is so amazing." And I was like, what has happened to that feeling in me? Where did it go? And so, right after New Year's, this past year...

Simone: Hold on, I want to pause here really quickly, to say the reason that I was feeling so light and so happy wasn't because I ended the year having made X amount. It was how I felt in just doing the work. I just wanted to verify that.

Sunny: But what I was saying, is like our circumstances were the same in some ways, in terms of the finances of our business, but you were doing it in a way that felt so light to you. And I'm like, I remember what that felt like. I wonder why and how I've let that go. And how do I get back in touch with that? And so, after New Year's past, I actually relistened, you know, sort of.

I listened to it when it first came out. And then, I relistened to my own wisdom, to my own words, and I was like, wow, this is really the thing, and like you really do have the opportunity to create a business that feels like home. To create a business that feels like you. To create a business that's a space you want to be in.

I mean, your business is an expression of you as a human being in the world. Just like all the things that I've ever done. Just like all the things all your listeners have ever done, right? Like, for me it was I ran a free clinic in the basement of a church. We sat in toddler chairs, little, tiny toddler chairs, for over 20 years, because... I didn't work in a normal corporate, you know, doctor's office or hospital because that just wasn't me, right?

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And so, if I was doing it that way, even in medicine, why was I trying to act differently here? I'm like, no, bring back the toddler chairs. Like, let's do it in our own special, unique, different way. And so, I decided to let go.

So, I had two products, basically, that I sold. I had my initial eight-week coaching sessions that I did, it's like a program. And so, I love my program, right? I love my people. It's amazing. We measure outcomes. It's the most effective physician wellness data that's been seen to date. Like, that's what my eight weeks does.

And for anybody who wants to stay, I had a program called the Continuity Program. And I signed people up for a year if they wanted to, at the end, that was optional. And so, my income was basically split. We had \$1.5 million on the front end, and \$1.5 million on the back end.

And I was like, there's nothing about this eight week program that feels heavy, nothing. But I'm evolving so quickly, and I'm different, the weeks and months and years that pass. That selling something for a year, you don't know what you're going to be wanting and doing a year from now.

And then also, as I said, that my most of my time was meeting with accountants and lawyers and CFOs and the complicatedness that I had infused, unintentionally, into my business by selling a product once, that I had to deliver over 52 weeks. And so, doing various accounting things that have to happen, when you have that business model. I was like, I've just decided I love, love, love my people.

But this business model is more complex than I would like on the back end, and the people can't see it from the front; it looks beautiful and amazing from the front. But the heaviness is like trying to, you know, do all the stuff that is necessary to continue that type of business model. So, I decided I was like, I'm just gonna drop that product, we're done. We're not going to sell this product that brings in \$1.5 million.

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Half of my annual income allows me to hire many people who make six figures in my business. You know, higher level executives or business managers, Director of Operations. And of course, I pay my coaches fair physician salaries, and so it was a huge risk. And everyone thought I was crazy.

And I was like, I just don't care what you think. Because what I care, is how I feel. And I don't like how I feel, right now. And I know that circumstances don't cause your feelings. But my coach, Bev, who I love, she was like, "But.. Yes, and... You can create circumstances where it's easier to feel certain feelings."

And so, it's easier for someone like me to feel light... Because some people they feel light when they have predictability and certainty. I believe certainty is all a myth. And, there's never any certainty. It's learning to embrace the uncertainty. So, for me, being bogged down and tied down does not feel light.

Or, having an obligation that's like... You literally can make a whole human being in your body and give birth in less than a year, so how can I possibly know what I'm going to want to be doing a year from now? Not having babies, by the way.

But it just reminds me - allowing myself to evolve, allowing my business to evolve, allowing myself to do things quarter by quarter, or maybe six months at a time, and allowing myself to adapt and let go of things that feel heavy, and that I learned require complicated back end things.

And to just learn that you can make this simple again, you can make this light again. And so, as of the end of August, which is like a month ago, when this is being recorded. I finally... Because I wanted to fulfill my services to everybody. I would never want to sell something and not fulfill the services.

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So, we did it and it was amazing, and we loved it. And I loved all my people. Nothing wrong with the coaching or the people or anything, it was all just the stuff that we had to do on the back end to track everything. And of course, people had onboarded at different times, so it was different payments and etc. Just lots of stuff.

This is, all again, a cautionary tale of keep your business simple. Keep it light, keep it what you want. Don't listen to what other people tell you. And so, we off boarded everybody, and I was so happy and so amazed and so relieved. And for the first time in years, I had no unfulfilled obligations; none. I had a blank slate this month. Completely blank slate. Nothing to fulfill.

Simone: How does that feel in your body?

Sunny: Oh my gosh, it's amazing, light, so light. So open.

Simone: Enchanted.

Sunny: Exactly. It's so enchanted. For everybody who's listening who has no clients, like that is an open and light possibility, because it is a blank slate. No matter what you've been telling yourself about what you're going to charge or what you're going to offer. It's a blank slate. And even people who have a business at whatever level, the future really is a blank slate. We just don't know it is or see it...

We pretend like it's not... I could have stopped at any point and said, like, here's a blank slate, we're gonna readjust and make this light. But I decided I was gonna finish out what was, and then rebegin, better informed. And so, I messaged you. I'm like, "Listen, if you had to start over, what have you learned? What would you do differently?"

And I was asking myself the same questions. Because I do get to start over and not only sky's the limit... My husband's an aerospace engineer. And

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so, he's like, "That's just not true. Sky's the beginning of space." I don't even know if we talked about that last time. But for some reason, I think about it this time.

So, forgive me, if I am repeating myself, but I love that. I love that. So, it's really anything. You can create anything. All the rules are made up in the world, on the planet. I mean, there's like gravity, which is real, right?

Simone: I want to say this. One of the things that Sunny and I keep getting back to each other, because we forget, because we both have human brains, is there is no point in business where it's big enough that you now have to get serious and be a grownup, and do all those serious, grownup things. There is no point. That point does not exist.

We both make a million dollars a year, and we both like found ourselves being, I don't know, being kind of going along with the flow. Where we're like, okay, well, I guess hiring a CEO is like the grownup thing to do. Now it's big. Now we make a lot of money. Lots of people are looking at us. I guess we have to get serious and have an org chart. Get serious and hire people. And get serious and, and none of that is true.

There's no point in a business where you ever have to be a serious grownup, ever. And, we both forget this. And we remind each other, "Hey, Sunny, did you know? You don't ever have to be a serious grownup?" And, she feeds it back to me when I forget. Right?

Sunny: And, you get to do whatever you want. Of course, you're going to be ethical, we all are. Of course, we have good hearts and good souls. And we're here to serve; all coaches are, right? So, these lessons are not just for... Some people will be like, nice for you. Right? Well, must be nice. But no, it's the same at a few \$100, as it is at a few \$1,000, as a few \$100,000, as a few million dollars.

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That you really do get the opportunity, the invitation, to create something on your terms. That is phenomenally magic about business. I mean, this isn't the way that it works in the employee world.

Simone: I think people need more... We're having this conversation because I want people to see... I think people like that idea, theoretically; oh, you can do whatever you want, like fuck the rules, whatever. But what does that actually mean? They don't know what it looks like to not follow the rules, because everybody's following the rules.

I want to tell people, one decision that I've made this year, which has been profound for me, and it has felt like a million tons off my back. It has felt like utter enchantment, is I decided, I never want my fucking business to be a fucking corporation. I never want to be somebody who's running a corporation ever, ever, ever.

I do not want to be somebody who's running an organization, a complicated organization ever, ever, ever. You know what? Right now, I run my business with my best friend. My best friend is my right hand woman; that's what I'm calling her now. She has no... That language? Chief of Operations, Director of Business Operation. Technically, I guess, you call her those things, but those words just profoundly make me sad.

So, I'm just calling her my amazing right hand woman. And I have another amazing right hand woman, and I coach my people. That's it.

Sunny: I have a right hand person, my best friend, and I coach my people. That's what feels good to me.

Simone: That's my business model. And I make stuff that turns me on. You know, I'll make like, oh, I want to teach about this. I want to develop ideas about this and teaching a master class. Oh, that's fun. Let's do that. So, I make shit that turns me on. I coach my people. I work with my best friend. That is my business model. And, I am never letting it become a corporation.

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And, this second part is important. That doesn't mean I don't have ambitions to make lots more money. I'm gonna make lots more money, and I didn't create this to run Pepsi or, you know, Microsoft, or Unilever.

Yeah, that is not what I signed up to be in life, right? That's the big decision I made this year. Because there's a part of me that always thought, "Well, eventually, I guess I have to stop working with my best friend, just screwing around, and making shit, and hanging out with my people, and coaching people. Because that's not what a serious business does. Well, guess what? That's what this very serious business looks like.

Sunny: Yeah, we're changing the world. This is my delusional belief. And I do have delusional positivity. And, I think it's a strength of mine. Right? And yours. But also, it's not just that. I also recognize the deep, deep pain that I have and that others have, so it's not just like lipstick on a pig.

It's like we're embracing the entire human experience. And why not believe that your business and my business are changing the world? Because when we show up with that belief, it becomes more and more true every day. And I believe that the world needs more people, women, minorities, people in general, showing up in their truth, and speaking their truth, and being them and living according to what lights them up.

I just think you cannot underestimate the influence of your business, with you and your best friend and you coaching.

Simone: Screwing around and making shit.

Sunny: And screwing around, and doing what we love and what lights us up. Because, for instance, for me and my people, you do it for people of all different kinds of, you know, locations on the planet, and ambitions in life. Like I was just at a mastermind yesterday, and somebody mentioned you. We're looking each other up on Instagram. I'm not really on Instagram that

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much, I don't really know very well how to use it. Like, I like the stories, I like that they disappear. I like the music.

And then, she saw your thing come up. She's like, "Oh, Simone, I love her." I'm like, just one of my dear friends. But people, just from all different walks of life know you, and your influence, in so many people, just to be their authentic selves and speak their truth.

And for me, in my world, it's physicians. And physicians are given a very corporate, you know, cogs in a wheel, go faster and faster. Monetizing human suffering, in a way that feels very moral injury to us; complete moral injury.

Something just came out in the New York Times today, that 63% of physicians are burned out and suffering. And many, many of them want to quit. For them, to see someone healing and doing it on their terms, which I used to do. I didn't ever do it in a corporate way. I always did it outside the box.

But to see a whole bunch of us... And what I do is I create a community where physicians come together, and there's no wrong way to woman physician. Because every single one of them is doing it on their terms, and they do it more and more on their terms. And for some people that looks like; I'm gonna stop delivering babies, because I just want to be with my kids at night. That should be acceptable. That is okay for you to choose that.

And so, it's not just here, but it's like when you do that in your business, and people can see that you are really living more and more aligned, and you're making decisions that are aligned with your priorities in this season of life. Because every season is different, right? And every season of business is different. And so, people can just, you know, choose that they can have seasons, too.

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I don't know why we ever thought that we had to live the same life as everyone else, and be the same our entire career, from 20 to 65, and then retire. And so, in particular this season, for me, you know well that my mom passed away this summer. That coincided with my summer program. The last yearlong thing that I had to fulfill, or that I chose to fulfill.

There's something very profound about becoming the matriarch of your family, and becoming hyper aware that life is short and your time is short. And like, I'm always tearful, tearful these days, but I don't wrong myself, or shame myself for being tearful these days. So, right before I got here to record with you, you know this as well, but I left the hospital; my brother's in the ICU, and he's very sick.

And this season of my life is like, we're going to serve people who are suffering, but in a way that doesn't create suffering for me and my family. Right? We're going to create a way that serves people and speaks volumes to those who want to listen, in a way that feels congruent to me. In a way that is a life that I don't feel I need to escape. That is a business I don't need to escape. It's a life I don't need a vacation from.

We recently had my 10th anniversary. And my 10th wedding anniversary was my husband's 40th birthday, too. And he was like, "Where do you want to go?" Because we usually do like these epic things. You know we go the Maldives. We do these amazing things; Blue Lagoon.

And I was like, "I don't need to go anywhere. I just want to be with you guys. And I just want to be here, and there's nowhere else I'd rather be." So, it's how can we create that life? It's savoring, for me, my business and my life, right now. And I hope to give this gift to everyone, and have it be a gift from my mom. It's like, that was the last thing she was saying to me, is like, "Live your life now. Don't wait. Because you get older and sicker. And then you can't do the same things."

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Like why do we wait? Imagine for everybody, if they want to do a future self-exercise when they're listening to this. Like, really, genuinely, seriously imagine yourself; your 65-,80-something-year-old self. Like my mom, before she's gonna pass. So, imagine yourself in that phase of life, and give yourself now a little advice. Like, maybe don't take yourself so seriously. Maybe, it all works out in the end. Maybe, you're pretty amazing.

Simone: Maybe, do that thing that's gonna piss off those five people that you're not gonna even remember on your deathbed.

Sunny: Exactly. And so, really, like, who gives a bleep what other people think? Because this really is your one and only precious life. And live accordingly, the best that you can. And if something doesn't light you up, you don't have to do it. And don't let anyone tell you you have to.

Simone: I think, Sunny... First of all, thank you so much for... I mean, you always do this, but I never take it for granted. Because not everybody does it. You always bring 100% of your heart. And, we could all hear it, we could all witness it. And, it's so generous of you. I treasure that you bring that, and I treasure that I know you and that we can have this moment here. So, thank you for that.

And secondly, I want to say our socialized brains are so, so, so good at rationalizing, and creating these elaborate, very subtle lies that are designed to keep us "safe", but not really. And here's what I mean by this. When I say a lot of people, I mean, myself included. In the past, where we chose things, and we do a lot of things that don't feel aligned, that don't feel good, to keep up with whatever.

Because so-and-sos that said we should. And then, we keep telling ourselves no, no, this is good. This is what I want. It's working. I'm happy. This work is so fulfilling. I'm helping so many people. I'm laying the groundwork for what I want to achieve in three years from now. And it's all good, right? And so, people are brilliant... and listen people.

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I mean, I'm starting with myself... People are lying to themselves. Yeah, lying to themselves. I want to offer everybody a question, which I'm piggybacking off of what Sunny already said. But a question that's gonna burn through all the lies that we tell ourselves. Which is; okay, your business is making a lot of money. It's making you happy. It's serving its purpose. You feel fulfilled, you're growing, etc. That's all good. But do you feel at home in it?

Sunny: Amen!

Simone: Very different from "Are you happy? Do you feel fulfilled?" Because your brain can run so many complicated mental gymnastics and acrobatics. To be like no, no, it's working. I love it. I love it. You know, I'm happy, right? But there's a huge difference between being happy and feeling at home. Right?

You can really love someone and be obsessed with them, and like super-duper like them. But do you feel like yourself... Do you feel at home with yourself when you're with that person? The answer to that question is going to tell you so much, that you probably were running all kinds of laps around.

So, I keep this question very close to my mind when I do something; does this feel like home? And when I say home, I mean a sense of at home in my body. At home in my soul. At home in my spirit. There's a sense of rightness that you feel when you're at home, that has nothing to do with social expectations, or whatever the fuck else. Right?

And so, that's the question. And if the answer's no, you know what? I don't feel entirely at home in my business. That is where you want to look. Okay, so what parts of it? Right? And when did I start doing this thing? When did I start creating this thing that no longer feels like home? And you want to do this with like, 1,000%, like canopy of self-compassion and love.

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Sunny: There's no shaming that. That is the key to everything.

Simone: No shaming. Just with such loving curiosity; when did I start doing this thing? Why did I start doing this thing? What are the things that I was believing? Or, maybe other people were telling me, that made me feel like I had to keep doing it this way? What if none of that is true?

And what would home feel like? And your brain might immediately interject and be like, whoa, we can't go there. Well, that's impractical. That's unrealistic. You can't.

Okay. Thank you, brain. Can you just take this cookie and sit down there for just a minute while we just allow ourselves this imaginative exercise? Let's just pretend that anything is possible for just one minute, and allow ourselves to dream up what would feel like home. What's a business that feels like home? What would that look like?

Sunny: Yeah. And so, I, for me, the coaching, the being on Zoom, or in person... But it's been 99% on Zoom, of course, these days. Being live with my people and talking, just like I'm talking with you. Like, this just feels like home. Just feels like home. It's like I was made for this. This is my purpose, this is my soul, it's what I want to do.

And it was the other stuff that didn't feel like home. That was sort of getting out of hand. And I was like, I need to create a space where I just get to be connecting with my people. And, that is my role. And even though we kept trying to design and engineer, where I would be the "visionary" on the top of the org chart. Where I didn't have to do these other things.

Simone: That doesn't work if the visionary just doesn't do org charts, at all.

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Sunny: You know, there, I was just in a meeting last weekend where someone said, “The person on the top is sort of really more the energy.” His name is Brandon Turner, and he does a podcast called *Bigger Pockets*. He does like tons of real estate stuff. And so, to hear this real estate guy, say like, “You're the energy,” I was like, yeah, that's more what it is.

We're the energy. But so, what is the energy of the business? What is the energy that we're bringing into this space? What is the energy that our clients are having in this space? And what is resonating with us and feels like home? Because if it doesn't, that's a sign. Our bodies are millions of years old, and these sensations and feelings, they have a purpose, right?

Simone: They are not just in the way of our goals.

Sunny: They are not in the way. They're trying to keep you safe. They're trying to keep you alive. They are serving you and loving you. And they have messages. And so, when things feel off, you can just; Okay, what do you gotta say, fear, discomfort?” or whatever the emotion is. Like, “Teach me all the things. Let me know what you're here to say.”

And the business that feels like home, it will be forever changing, right? In seasons. Whatever anyone is listening right now, whatever season they're in, in their business. And I know you have people who listen who don't have any clients yet, and people who are running multiple...

Simone: Who don't have a business at all.

Sunny: Who don't have business. And then, even people who are running multiple eight-figure businesses, right. And so, knowing that there always will be this constant, as long as we're alive, all the way to our deathbed, we are going to be realigning and readjusting. And adapting with what feels right and what feels like home.

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And what seems like what we want for this season and allowing us ourselves to sort of just, you know, evolve with that over time; it's supposed to be this way, nothing has gone wrong.

Simone: Your alignment will literally be different from season to season. And I think that's such an important message. So, thank you. Lots of things change in my business all the time. And then you know, sometimes I get people assuming that I am disowning my past choices, or saying, Oh, I guess that didn't work. So, now you're doing this.

And I'm like, no, no, that worked, that was beautiful. That was aligned. That's exactly what I needed to do and what was beautiful for my business. And now, I'm in a different season. Right? And I think of it, Sunny, as a diversity issue, right? Because it's not just the diversity of your skin color, or sexual orientation, or whatever. It's the diversity of ourselves that we experience throughout our lives.

Because we all contain multitudes, right? Like, you are a diverse being. There are many parts of you. And even the same part of you is going to change over the course of your life. So, let yourself be a diverse ecosystem. Let yourself have different priorities. Hang out with different kinds of people, be influenced by different things, find comfort and wholeness in different things.

Sunny: You can look in hindsight and be like, this is who I always was, in many ways, right? Because we're often becoming more of who we always were. And you can look for the history of whatever this new development is for you, that it's been there all along, right. But it just looks different, in different seasons.

And so, as I let go, you know, of that and allowing my business to evolve. As you said, it was you and your best friend, and you coaching. Mostly, for the past year, I mean, I have all these beautiful, amazing coaches. I love them so much. I could not love my coaches more.

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But in terms of the admins, they were never an issue. Nothing to do with the coaching was ever an issue, and didn't feel like home. But on the back end, it's really mostly we've been hiring, firing and hiring, firing.

But it's really mostly been me and my husband. That's it, right? People are like; you can't work with your husband, this is unprofessional. This is ridiculous. He doesn't know online business. He has no idea. I'm like, he's an aerospace engineer and he can upload Zoom calls.

Simone: This is not rocket science.

Sunny: No. I know. But I don't have the linear brain. I mean, I did get through medical school, obviously. But you know, I've aged and I'm 47 now, which is not very old. But you know, I went and got a neuro-psych assessment and like, my brain doesn't work the same way that it used to. I can't be as linear as I used to be.

Plus, I had a head injury, and a couple of injuries, and an anoxic brain injury from being in a coma when I was training as a physician. But then, I had a head injury with a bicycle. And I just haven't felt like I could be as linear, but my husband can be so let him be the left side of my brain. And, let me be the right side. And this is the part, this part, is what makes the business what it is. That other part is not.

Allow everyone who's listening to you to be fully them, and when they get to the point that they need further support on the Excel sheets, hire the Excel sheet supporter, it's fine. And then, so now that it's just me and my husband, it's so much lighter. I mean, we still have, of course, issues. Because I'm not a super reliable business partner, in terms of delivering on time. I always deliver for my clients, but you want me to do my taxes? I'm gonna put that off as long as I can.

When we came to our clean slate and new offers, and like how, and same offers and all these things, so this month has been our biggest revenue

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month ever, after shutting down half of my business model, because that felt heavy. When I lean into what feels light, and magical, and fun, and enchanting, and I'm so lit up by, I just feel like the energy is contagious.

Mirror neurons for real, energy is contagious. And so, if you are deeply convicted, that what you're doing matters and is right, and is going to help people, they feel that and they want to come along for the ride. So, you go first. Lead, and they will follow.

Simone: I told you all that I decided this year that I'm not going to corporatize my business, that I refuse to grow up and get serious. And then, I'm going to have this very simple, you know, business model. Where I strip out all of the organizational complexity, whatever, blah, blah. I work with my best friend, I coach, I make shit for fun; that is my entire business, and help people. And I made more money than ever before, this year, so far.

I've already, you know, surpassed what I made last year, and I've given away more money than ever. And it's just, you know, it's another thing that makes me feel so fucking light when I give away money, and I know you feel the same way. And it's just more light, more light, and even in my personal life. I'm like, get rid of more clutter and more clutter.

Somebody in *Joyful Marketing* told me today, that I don't even remember saying this, but apparently, I said in a coaching call, that my life, my everyday life is not fancy, but it's very, very simple and modest. And, that's true. And I'm also kind of like waking up from like a haze of thinking that my life has to look a certain way from the outside.

Like, I have to live in a certain kind of house. I have to buy a certain kind of car. I have to wear whatever certain kind of clothes, in order to be like the right kind of millionaire. And, I also kind of like waking up. I mean, I don't again, I'm not shaming when I thought those things. That was really fun and exciting. But now I'm like, you know what? I have this apartment. It's a

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modest, it's a nice but modest apartment. And I actually don't think I need a bigger house.

Yeah, I actually don't think that I need any more clothes than what I have. I don't think that I need any more bands. I don't think I need any more stuff. And in fact, if I had a bigger house then I would think, I would just get stressed out about keeping everything organized and clean. And it's just the right size for me and a husband and a kid.

And maybe sometimes, I guess sometimes we'll squeeze them in, you know. I feel like it's a very Korean thing to do. There's not a lot of space in Korea. So, we just all squeezed and you know what? There's something I love, there's something I love about that.

You know, America, there's so much space everywhere. People have giant homes, giant cars, and that's a function of the fact that there's a lot of land. Here, we have a lot of people, not a lot of land. So, we just kind of squeezed, and I realize, not always, but a lot of times, I love it, you know?

Sunny: It's like home, right? Feels like home. You don't feel at home in a ginormous McMansion.

Simone: Might be fun to visit. You know, I love staying in five-star hotels, once in a while. But it's not home. Home is where I squeeze a little bit, and it's simple. And when the client who said that, it felt like a relief. I think she said, "I thought that if I made a lot of money, I had to live a certain kind of life. And I wasn't feeling attracted to that. So, I thought I had to."

I was like, no. And she loved hearing me say, actually, my life is very simple. And I'm about to make it even simpler.

Sunny: I think that is my continual goal; is to make things even more simple and even more simple. It's like, you know, the David, they say is, it's not about what it is, it's what's left, when you take everything away, that doesn't

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belong. There's some kind of saying, I'm sure I'm messing it all up. But you know, you've taken all the things away that don't need to be there. I think this simplicity is really so, so valuable. And it's so much exactly what I need and want, and choose on purpose right now.

And in terms of like, I don't ever have to work again, right? I'm sure you don't either.

Simone: Well, it depends how you want to live.

Sunny: How you want to live and if your kid is going to school. Literally, I'm financially independent now. And I was even just working at a free clinic, because I was always so simple. Like, I worked at a free clinic, yes, doctors make good money, but I made the least at my university, right. And it's just compound effect over time. And so, in terms of simplicity, like I drove a salvage car, salvage vehicle, from 2006, until like, a couple months ago. When my husband sold it because I wasn't here to drive it very much. And in terms of simplicity and clothes, like I'm literally wearing a sweater shirt that I bought at Marshall's over 10 years ago, and I wore in my maternity photos, and my kid is nine. And, that's what I'm wearing right now.

Simone: I'm wearing my husband's inside shirt.

Sunny: Yeah, so and if not, because I'm like, trying to show off that I'm low, like, you know, not high maintenance. It's what feels like home. And so, I just want to feel like home, no matter whether it's the car, the clothes, the business, the relationships, the friendships.

Tomorrow, I'm gonna go have dinner with my friends from you know that I met the first day of medical school. We were like, you know, I stabbed one of them with a needle for the blood draw. And the blood started dripping all over the place. I started shaking, I started crying. And I started saying, "I'm never going to be a good doctor. I'm never going to be a doctor. How am I going to do this? I'm shaking and crying."

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And like, they're still my closest friends all these years later, because there's just something about someone who just knows you, right? And has seen all your things and just feels like home. And so, people can think whatever they want to think, but like I allow my clients to see all the things and hear all the things. I am myself with them, and I cry with them.

There was some time this past year, where I was telling myself that I was overemotional and that if I had had my medications, right, I wouldn't cry so much on the calls with my clients. And now, and you know what? Corinne told me, so I'm gonna totally mess it up. But it's something like, "If crying is wrong, I don't want to be right." I don't know. I'm gonna totally mess it up.

If crying is wrong, I don't want to be right. Isn't that right? Yeah. Because she does it too, right. And she was just walking it. I'm just mentioning her... She had been walking me through that challenging time. And really, I decided wow, yeah, I really don't want to be right. If being right means that you don't connect on such a deep level that you cry when they cry, or when you're not willing to share your truth.

Because I think there's this idea that coaches have it all together. Or, that we're not humans, still there is that idea. Like I want them to see me as messily, as humanly, as you know, things are amazing. And they're very painful. And it's both and I still have a human brain. And I have so much gratitude for the tools that coaching and therapy and psychiatry and studying compassion and all these things brought to my life.

And I cannot imagine life without them, because I so much meet myself, right where I am, every single day.

Simone: Okay, I know we could take over five more hours. I have to cut it off somewhere. So Sunny, I'm gonna ask you...

Sunny: And this is the point. And now is the time, friend.

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Simone: What if next time we just did over five hours? I want to ask you to leave our listeners with one question. If you could offer them one question, for themselves, to take into their lives and their businesses, what would it be? I mean, we ask so many amazing questions in our conversations, but if you were to pick one, or a new one, I don't know, what would you say?

Sunny: I mean, there's so, so many amazing things that people can be thinking about, reflecting on, asking themselves. So, I would encourage them actually to develop like, a little, you know, a plethora of them. Like a little card deck of them. A little set of things...

Simone: Make your own oracle deck.

Sunny: Make your own oracle deck with questions that resonate with you, right? Because when I'm coaching, it's like, there's these certain things, I'll give you some, but there's certain things like you want to try them on like a shoe or a shirt or pair of pants. Does this feel right to you?

So, if the question that I'm asking feels like it does not suit you at all... If it doesn't feel like home, that's not yours. Try something else, try another version, make an iteration. And so, the things that, for instance, for me could be super helpful is like, what would love do? What would love do?

And it doesn't matter if I'm in the ICU with my brother. It doesn't matter if I'm doing something in my business, it doesn't matter. What would, if I'm trying to be kind to myself, what would love do? So helpful.

And to really think of that, like, if people are using the model, put love in the F-line? What comes next? What's the action? Right? And what are the thoughts that create that feeling of love? And if you're not using the models, just a simple, simple question, what would love to? What would kindness do? What would self-compassion do? What would compassion do?

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Even if you're so mad at someone, husband or whoever else, what would compassion do? With someone who's being violent or mean, what would compassion do? What would love do? And then if that doesn't resonate, or feels kind of strange to people, something that is helpful in my community...

Because we have a very active chat box, and people support each other and they say the kindest things to each other. And they tend to feel so much compassion for the person on the other side of the screen. That they see crying, torturing themselves, being so hard on themselves, saying the meanest things to themselves, like they're an internet troll, basically to themselves.

And so, you know, a question that could be really helpful is like, in all honesty, not just like playing around, what would you say to your best friend if she was going through this? What would you say? Because if you really imagine someone you really, deeply care about going through the same thing you are, all of a sudden, you have so many kind words.

What if you didn't hit your business goal? Would you be like, "Well, you suck." Because look at the language that you use for yourself, "You suck. Nobody likes you, though. You were never gonna do it anyway. You might as well quit." Could you imagine saying that to your best friend? No.

Simone: The other layer I want to add to that is, okay, so let's say you didn't hit a business goal. And your brain is saying all kinds of mean things to you. Another really good question is, if you imagine somebody saying those mean things to your best friend, what would you say? Not to your best friend, but to the person who's saying the mean things?

Sunny: Fuck off. Am I allowed to say that? Stop that, motherfucker. That is cruel and mean and terrible. Stop it,

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Simone: And I'm gonna punish you if you keep going. This isn't just what would self-compassion do? Sometimes, it's what would righteous anger do? What would self-defense do? Right? What would somebody standing up for you do?

Sunny: Right. What would somebody standing up for you do, is a good one. Imagine someone who had your back and was like, always there for you. What would they come and say if someone was saying those kinds?

Simone: They wouldn't just be like; oh, that's not nice. They'd be like; who the fuck are you? Get out of here! What did you say to my friend?

Sunny: They'd push them. And then, they take you somewhere nice and sit you down. And they'd say something like, "It's gonna be okay," after that sub person has berated you.

Simone: That person's a jackass. Don't worry about them. Fuck them! I got you!

Sunny: And, we'll show them! Kristin Neff has a book called *Fierce Self-Compassion*. It's not just self-compassion, but fierce self-compassion. It's, in particular, designed for people who identify as women, because there's a lot of boundaries and stuff you have to put up.

And so, just being fiercely protecting yourself, your mind, your heart, your soul. And knowing that our brains are there, and they're designed, evolutionarily, over time, to be hard on us, so that we don't make the same mistakes again and die. Right? But it's trying to protect you, so kindness for that.

But just realizing, you know, that can be there, and you don't have to believe it. You can see it; it doesn't have to go away. You observe it, you're gonna have all these thoughts. You will always have thoughts that don't necessarily serve you. And, that's okay. And so, how do you meet yourself,

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right there, not want to be anywhere else? And learn to just have kindness for yourself.

Simone: Amen. Thank you for another conversation overflowing with genuine humaneness, heart, compassion, and full of wisdom for how to find our way home. And, I think that's what you're all about. That's what I try to be all about. And, I'm so excited to imagine what part three of this conversation will be like. I don't know, a year and a half from now.

Sunny: I know. Okay, let me say, I'm just gonna say, I hope to bring some wellness. Like, teaching people what I do, and how we do it inside of EWP. And I think that that is the next evolution for me. I want to ask, what are you imagining that we're going to be talking about on part three?

Simone: I have no fucking clue.

Sunny: Really? Okay, let's pretend, if you had a magic wand, do you have any idea? Like, if you let your imagination run wild, what do you think would be possible on part three?

Simone: Gosh, I think that I'd be somewhere off in some other plane where I'm talking so much more about spirituality.

Sunny: Yes. So, listen to that, right. That's your inner wisdom.

Simone: I like how I was like; I don't know. And you're like; yes, you do know.

Sunny: Of course, you know. We all know. We all know. But notice how even Simone Seol, who everyone thinks has it all figured out, is like, I don't know. Right? We all do. We all do it. Our brains always offer that, and notice how the I don't know blocks us from, for you, like it's going to be on another plane and spiritual. Let's go.

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Simone: Let's go. Love it. Love it. Oh, I love you. Thank you again. If you want to find Sunny and learn about her work, I'll leave all the links in the show notes, and we will talk to you in a year and a half apparently.

Sunny: I can't wait. Where we'll be even more enchanted. Bye.

Simone: Even more crazy. Okay, bye.

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