

# Ep #228: Reimagining the Language Around Coaching and Business

## 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. I wanted to take some time to talk about, not how we do coaching, and how we do business, how we do marketing, but how we think about these things and the language that we use to conceptualize these things and talk about these things. Because the language you use, it's not just language, right?

The language we use frames our reality. It defines the filters through which we experience our perceptions. And it colors the way we look at the experiences that we have, it influences our decisions. So, language is really important.

I've been thinking a lot about how we can detox the way that we talk about business, and about coaching and marketing, from what I think are constructs of colonization of domination, hierarchy, conquest, and acquisition. Now, as I begin to talk about this, I want to be very, very clear: I'm very much in the stages of exploring, right? This podcast episode isn't me teaching you how to think about these things, it's an invitation to an exploration. Because I, myself, am exploring.

And so, think of everything that I suggest here as an open-ended question where you can think about this on your own, in ways that make sense to you, and draw your own conclusions. I was thinking specifically about the kind of dominant default way that a lot of us have really been conditioned to think about coaching.

If you listen to this podcast, chances are, I think the majority of you are coaches; even though some of you are not actually. Even if you are an artist, even if you make things, even if you are a musician or a writer. Or, any number of you, if you are a creative person, we have been conditioned,

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we have been programmed, to look at what we do in terms of how it fits into capitalist society, and how it fits into systems of commerce.

Which is why, as soon as we have a thing, we are taught to think about it in terms of how you can monetize it, how you can turn it into a business. Now, obviously, there's nothing inherently wrong with monetizing something or business, at all. I love business. I hope that's obvious.

But the question I want to ask is; why has this become the default? That if you love coaching, it must be a business. If you are an artist, you got to somehow monetize your art. Why is the default so much that we have to, first and foremost, figure out and prioritize how we can fit our soul's work, our creativity, the way we want to be of service to the world, our vocation, into terms that make sense for capitalism?

Not to say that we shouldn't ever do that. Not to say that that's bad if we do that, but why is that the center of it? Right? That's something that we can get curious about. You know, I was talking to my collaborator, my friend, my teacher, Melissa Tiers, and she was telling me about how she's been teaching... She's had a private practice of coaching, and teaching coaching, and hypnosis for literally, decades.

She was telling me about, how up until this year, and she started hanging out with me. I mean, it's not that we only started hanging out this year, you know what I mean? We started talking a lot and collaborating... It's not until... Sorry, when I said this year, I met last year, 2022.

It wasn't until 2022, that she started to think of herself as having a business. Even though she was making, you know, hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, for the past however many years this has been her career; that has given her a very good living for a long time. She had never thought of herself as; I'm an entrepreneur, I have a business.

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She was telling me about how she always thought of it as; hey, this is my practice. I have a practice. I have a coaching practice. I have a hypnosis practice. I have a teaching practice. And she was telling me about how the word “business” it never felt like what she was doing; a business woman, an entrepreneur. It never felt like an idea that really fit her well.

She used to be a rock-and-roll musician, right? And then, she found her way into hypnosis and coaching. And for her, this was always; hey, this is my practice. And it was never her business, even though it was her business because she obviously made money from it, paid her bills with it, paid taxes with it; everything, right?

Having that conversation with Melissa also got me thinking, you know, I never minded... I was always fine with calling my thing, the thing that I do, the business. Like I said, I always thought business was interesting from day one, even though I, at times, felt very impostery around it. Even though, at times I felt like, you know, maybe real businesses were white men in suits, in boardrooms.

Maybe, I'm just pretending. I'm doing some kind of make believe, right? So, I had times when I was like, “I don't know if what I'm doing counts as business.” But what I always thought was, yes, I thought of what I did as a business. But before that and prior to that, what I did, it always felt to me, like a channel for my creativity, more than anything, right?

So, when I first began the first iteration of my business I was writing, I was doing art, I was doing hypnosis. And then, I was also doing tarot readings. I was doing life coaching. And then, the reason that I was able to be fluid, from morphing from one form of expression to another form of expression, one form of helping people to another form helping people, I don't think I could have done that if I was like, “This is my business. This is my offer.”

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Not that it made me money, not a lot of money, in the beginning, but it made me money. But my primary relationship with my work, my vocation, was one in which my job was tending to my creativity. It was my creative practice. And I think that is why I was able to stick with it for so long, right?

Because a lot of people asked me, “Simone, didn't you get discouraged when you were starting out, and you're putting yourself out there, and you weren't making very much money for a long time?” And really, like for years and years, I made, you know, nothing even close to a full time living. “Didn't that discourage you? How did you handle the disappointment?”

And honestly, my answer was, I wasn't, I mean, like, sure. Did I think it would be nice if I could figure out how to make lots of money from it? Sure. Did I think it'd be nice if I could pay my bills, and you know, have this be my full time job? Of course, of course I did. And, did I experience frustration about that? Of course, I did.

But it was never this great despair of; oh, no, I can't turn it into... Because to me, the business aspect of it was a nice bonus. Like, if it happens, that's awesome. But primarily, this is what I do to express my creativity. This is what I do, because something in me wants to help these people, this way.

It's who I am. It's how I want to be of service in the world. It feels natural to who I am. A part of me feels really at home helping people in this way; whether it's through hypnosis, or coaching, or tarot. It was never like; I gotta turn this into a business that pays my bills, or otherwise, it's a failure.

Again, that was one of my goals. It was a little disappointing when I couldn't figure it out for a while. But that was never the main thing. And because the main thing was something else, I think that's why I was able to keep going for so long. Without it ever being like a really super heavy thing that I have to figure out. Because I think if it was that, I think I would have given up a long time ago. Right?

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And so, thinking about these things got me to... It made me want to offer you some questions about; hey, do you really want to experience the thing that you do, first and foremost, as a business? Or, do you want to think of it in a different way? And, again, it's not just semantics. It really is how you understand the space that your work takes up in the world. It's how you conceptualize what you do, and how what you do moves through the world. It's very important. It's not just a cute reframe, right?

What if, and I've been saying this for a long time, what if instead of marketing... Because the language of business, it really truly is... A lot of it has been created by, reinforced by, defined by, white men who have colonized the world. And they have sort of defined business in terms that are domineering, and that are based on conquest and hierarchy and acquisition.

And, you know, think about the language you use. We “capture” leads. Like, we're taught you have to go capture some fresh leads, right? We talk about “getting” sales. We talk about “converting” people. Think about how “acquisitioning”. Like, how colonial, “colonialism”, if that's a word, is like we have to “go out and conquer”. We have to “win” the sales. It's very one-sided, in which I have to go dominate the other. I have to go win the other. I have to plant my flag, and capture them and convert them. Right?

I think this must be the reason that many of my peers, my clients, even though they fundamentally are interested in business, they want to be better at business, I think this might explain... This is my current hypothesis, right? This might explain some of the deeper, never quite resolved incongruence and discomfort that people feel about marketing and business.

That's why I think so many of my clients don't ever feel entirely at home in talking about marketing. Because we have been taught this language that is based on ways of being, ways of relating to others, that are not affirming

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of our humanity. That is not based on true, joyful reciprocity. That is not based on true collaboration and community. Right?

I've also been thinking about how I have been conditioned. I have been taught to think a lot about, you know, the success of my business, the progress, the growth of my business, in a way that centers (around) me; my revenue, my clients, my profit, my growth, my company, this is what I achieved.

And I was thinking about how that reflects the profound, dissociated individualism that is inherent to modern Western culture. And how that too, is another part that I think, now that I think about it, hasn't really sat right with my soul. Because you might have heard this before, but you know, there's truly no one who is actually, truly, genuinely self-made. Right?

In a way, you know, what I earn from my business doesn't really belong to me. And it's not really about me, even when I come up with something amazing that was really helpful to people. Truthfully, I don't really think of that as belonging to me, something I possess. I think of it as something that I get to channel.

And if it's all me, me, me. That I have to be number one. I have to get the most sales. I have to get the most clients. I have to have the most success. I have to have the biggest amount of money... That completely leaves out the questions that are critical to me, personally, about what is the impact that my business is having on my community, on the world?

And these, not as secondary questions, but these as primary questions. Not like; oh, I had this business success and then it benefitted people. That's the wrong order. The way that I'm looking at it now, the way that it feels to me now, it's what has your business done for the world? What's the impact it's having on the community? Who helped me? Who contributed to this?

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And if everything that my business does, which necessarily involves tons of other people, what if it's all like a communal art project, and I just happen to be a part of it? What if all the wealth that is generated through my business does not belong to me? It's not mine to, you know, hoard, but it really belongs to the community.

What if I cannot take credit for my “success”? What if it's the place that I'm in and the people that I'm around? And all the structures and the individuals and the cultures... I was trying to think of a different word for structures. But really, structures that prop me up? Everything that I have built, what if it was community built?

That's not to discount the role that I played. But it's very different when I understand myself as a component of a vibrant community that is changing. Where I get to contribute and I get something in return.

That's very different, thinking of it that way, than thinking, “All me, me, me, me, me. My money. My clients. My impact. My legacy,” my this and that. Right? That's a very different way of thinking about it.

And I think another aspect, another facet, of this colonial way of thinking about business, this capitalism defined way of thinking about the work of your life, is to measure the success of any endeavor that you do, by how much money it earned.

Again, I know that we think about other things, but really how much money you earned, what kind of place your work takes up in the matrix of capitalism, is how we are taught to primarily assess and value and place where our work belongs in the world.

I cannot tell you... If I had a penny, for every time someone apologized for their business, wanted to hide their business, or wanted to somehow



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discount their business because it's not, "Well, it's not making as much money as so-and-so. Well, it's not bringing in income, yet."

Every time someone thought less of their business. Communicated a way of thinking that lessened their business, because of the way their business fits into the matrix of capitalism. Y'all, if I had a penny every time that happened, I would have a lot of money. Because it happens all the time; I see it.

We are programmed, conditioned, taught to center our function inside capitalism. The function of our practices, of our work, our art, inside the matrix of capitalism.

What would it be like if we decentered that? What if, instead of measuring the success of your work by how much dollars it brought into your bank account... What if you measured it by things that transcend that? Things that predate even the existence of dollars.

Like, how much truth has been spoken? How much integrity has been reinforced? How many genuine connections have been built? How much communal wealth has been created and circulated? How much humanity, how much dignity has been affirmed? How many future generations have been impacted? How have we impacted the earth and each other? What if we measure the success of your work in these terms?

Again, not replacing money; I cannot stress this enough. This is not a conversation that is about anti-money, anti-business. But it's, what are we placing at the center? And what are we considering, in exclusion of all other things?

We, all together, can rewrite the principles of sustainable commerce, my friends. We can do sacred trade. Where the trades happen not out of a sense of obligation, or guilt, or indebtedness, or scarcity, whether it's

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buying or selling. But because it's genuinely coming out of the joy of our heart. And, the authenticity of who we are. To offer and to receive.

Because that exchange enriches the communal wealth, and it happens voluntarily. And, it happens with a sense of sacred purpose. What if that was the primary way we experienced business, whether it's marketing or selling, or buying? What would that be like?

What if every time we bought or sold or marketed, both parties ended up more spiritually rich? Both parties. What if every exchange left both parties feeling more alive, more like themselves? How would our marketing, selling, buying, practices change?

What if every time we engaged in an act of commerce the ultimate question is; how is this enriching community? Rather than, how is this enriching my bottom line?

I just want to reiterate what I said in the beginning, which is that this episode is not one with answers and 'shoulds'. It's one of questions. A lot of questions that I don't know the answer to. But I think questions that are really worth asking and spending time with. Especially when we don't have ready-made answers.

I think that it's really important to sit with questions that don't have ready-made answers, and to come up with your own answer for it. Right? And I talk a lot about business and how to recreate the language around it, but I also want to talk about coaching and recruiting, the language around that, because there's a lot of colonized concepts. A lot of supremacist, hierarchical concepts in the way we talk about coaching, too.

You know, just yesterday, I was on a coaching call for my program, *Joyful Marketing*. I was talking about how I feel ambivalent about this construct of

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like; okay, this is a coaching call. I'm coaching you. You show up and get coached.

As if coaching is something that I give you, and enter into your brain, while you are a blank slate and passively receiving coaching. About, how that doesn't seem like what's really happening. And a lot of times, what seems to be happening isn't I give coaching and you receive it, but we come together.

Two human beings come together and we share a presence. And from that, some kind of alchemy happens. To my clients, I offer my presence. And between the life force of my client, and the innate, unconscious intelligence, wisdom, the creativity, life force of the client in front of me. And the intelligence, life force, creativity of who I am. We meet and something magical happens.

I feel like that's what really happens in coaching. As opposed to this exchange of, I give you coaching and you receive it. There is the coach, and then there's the coachee, right? That sort of one-directional relationship.

Now, does this mean I'm going to stop using the words, "Hey, let me coach you. Come get coached?" No, at least probably not for the foreseeable future. This isn't me saying, "Let's not use these words, these words are bad." It's not me saying, "Money is bad. Let's not use these terms of marketing."

I don't think it's quite that simple, and I don't think it's necessary to completely replace our vocabulary. You know, some words, if they're in wide use, they are useful, right? They are useful shorthand. And I think, you know, when I say divest ourselves of ideas that don't personally resonate with us, it does not mean we have to come up with a whole new vocabulary.

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It could just mean being really intentional about what are the energies, the qualities, the intentions, that you imbue in the way you do things, in the way that you use language. And I think everyone's right answer to that is going to be different. Your right answer to that, is going to be different from my right answer to that.

So let me just be honest. Sometimes, when I hear my mentors, my coaches, my teachers, talk about things and they raise questions. And when I try to answer those questions for myself, I often end up asking myself like, "Oh, what would they think? What do they think is the right answer?"

I'm just telling you that that might happen to you, just because it's something that happens to me. So, as you think about this, please resist the temptation to ask yourself, "What would Simone think is right?" If you have that temptation, again, I'm only raising that because I sometimes have that temptation with my own teachers, right?

So, what I think is right is not important; does not matter. I want you to ask yourself, what feels like truth to you? What feels like frame and the language and the constructs of the kind of world that you want to live in? Right? What frames, ideas, constructs, do you feel at home in? That is the most important question.

What kind of qualities? What kind of energies? What kind of decisions, what kind of intentions do you want more of, in your world? And, how can you bring all of that to the way you think about coaching and business?

Alright, my friends, that was a lot of questions. I hope that gives you interesting food for thought. And I am literally, like living for this conversation. This is so interesting to me. It's so juicy. It feels so important. So, I'd be really happy if you tag me on social media. Let me know your thoughts. We're all learning together. We are all walking each other home.

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I'll talk to you next week. 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.