

# WORTH EVERY PENNY *joycast*<sup>™</sup>

Hey, portrait photographer. What if I told you I could help you find a client who could afford your photography in the next few minutes without ever even stepping foot in your town? You'd probably say, "Sarah, you're crazy." Well, friend, today is your lucky day because I am going to prove it to you right now. The truth is no matter where you live, there are people with disposable income. You just haven't learned how to look for them. So today I'm going to teach you a tool I created called "Follow the Mower," so you'll know exactly where to go to find a portrait photography client who can afford you right now. Let's get started.

So the real question is how are portrait photographers like us able to run a profitable business and still put our families first, without selling digital files for cheap and working all the time? I'm Sarah Petty, your host of the Worth Every Penny Joycast. And I went from a stressed out overworked mama with three babies to being named one of America's Most Profitable Photographers without working my kids' lives away. Each week, I'll show you how to find and serve boutique portrait photography clients in a world where we compete with free, thanks to everyone having a digital camera in their pocket. Take the first step to adding more joy and profit to your life by downloading your free photography business tools at [joyofmarketing.com/podcast](http://joyofmarketing.com/podcast).

I want to share a little backstory, so this makes sense to you. But I was raised by a dad who is awesome and could do anything. He was the eighth of 10 raised on a farm in Iowa. They didn't have a lot of money, so if he wanted it done, he had to figure out how to do it. He could do anything. Literally, he could do electrical wiring. He could fix any machine, he could rebuild, take apart, put back together any engine. And as far as tasks around the house, we painted our own walls, we raked our own leaves every single fall. We mowed, we did everything ourselves. And I was raised with the belief that we don't pay for services, that's just how it was. We don't pay for services. I think my parents even use those words.

Luckily, this served me. My husband and I were both working. He'd started a company, I'd started a company, and occasionally we needed to hire things done. I had so much guilt. And it's funny because I've gotten through that. And being in my house, and painting, and doing

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projects, we have to pick where we're going to spend our time. Well, now I find myself with three teenagers. And that's great, because we live on a three acres, and we always have tons of leaves and yard work. But the problem is my yard guy went to college. One of my twins, my son, who always kept our yard really nice, he went to college in a different state, so he's no longer home to mow. And I grew up mowing, so I have no problem teaching my girls to mow, but they play volleyball all year round. And most weekends in the spring and in the summer, we are at volleyball tournaments.

And so we were like, "We don't have time. What are we going to do?" And so I talked to my husband about, "Hey, we're gone all the time. The girls are at volleyball all the time. And I'm at my clients' houses sometimes. And I see that yard crew there, they come in, and like an hour, they just plow it all out. What if we just did that this year?" And my hubby actually agreed to it. I couldn't believe it, because he loves working in the yard, and that's his unwind. But we just knew for this summer we needed to get help with it. And I didn't even ask the price, I let him handle it, because I really didn't want to know. But then I overheard that it's a hundred bucks per time to come and mow our yard.

And I hope my girls aren't listening, because since COVID and they've been home, they have learned to mow. And they're mowing grandma's yard for \$20. So if they only knew that they probably could make more money mowing their own yard. But we've already hired this crew, and they come once a week, and sometimes more. This spring when it was raining and it was growing, raining, growing, they were coming every four to five days. And I hadn't really thought about it until I was sitting here doing the math, right? Let's see, half of the year from spring to fall, they mow, that say 26 weeks at a hundred bucks a week, that's 2,600 bucks. \$2,600 that we have what for? We have nothing for this. We have nothing, no money. Literally, our yard looks exactly the same as it did six months ago. Now, we all know, right, that if we leave our yard, the weeds come and they get out of control pretty quickly.

But I was on a call with a coaching student the other day who is stuck. And she is a fabulous member of my Peak Performance coaching community, and her name is Meredith.

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And I love having there, because she's a leader, and she really exemplifies one of our core values that she lifts as she climbs. But we are in a conversation about getting clients. And after I talked to her, I sat down and I really created this tool that I'm about to share with you to help her, and I think it will help you too. So if you want to go and find people who have money to spend, here's what I want you to do, and you don't even have to set one foot in your town. I want you to get in your car, and I want you to drive around neighborhoods where you think there might be strong prospects. Nicer houses, they don't have to be the mansions, but just nicer houses.

And what I want you to do is look for that mowing crew. Guys, I pass them almost every single day. There's a big tractor trailer with a flatbed, with three or four mowers on it, and maybe a truck following it, and they all have logos on there. And you see them, the four or five guys will hop out of the truck, and they'll each get on a machine, and they'll back it down the ramp, and vram, they put their headphones on, and they take off in that yard, and they go like crazy. They don't care if they're blocking the street, which I think is funny, because it's like, hey man, they're entrepreneurs, they're coming in, they're getting it done. I'm kind of proud of them.

But I was sitting there the other day as I was kind of maneuvering. We live in a country road, so I had to kind of go off in this side because they were taking up the whole skinny road. I had to go down in the ditch a little bit to get around them. And I remember thinking, "Look at all these trucks, now that I'm paying for that, I'm realizing all these people are paying this money that they have nothing to show for it." It's crazy. So I want you to write this down. I want you to follow the mower. This is what I want you to do, I want you to follow the mower. What neighborhoods are they in? Who are they serving? Where are they going? How many houses on the street? These are people right now you can market to because they have disposable income. Now that doesn't mean they value photography. But the first thing is that they have money to spend on nothing.

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Lawn mowing is really nothing. It's chopping the same grass over and over. Look, you get one client and it's worth your time. They refer you and so on, and so on. And just like the mower when they're out mowing a yard, and the neighbors come over and say, "I probably should have a mower in my yard too." And then they refer, and so on, and so on. The same thing will happen for you. You'll start to find that you'll have clusters of clients in certain neighborhoods. And then, you can get a list of the rest of that neighborhood. And you can send what we call a dog whistle marketing piece. That's not the point of this episode today, but one of these days I'll get into really detail about what a dog whistle marketing piece is. It's a promotional piece that is created professionally.

It's not a cheap, ugly, poorly, designed postcard. That's a dog whistle to attract cheap price sensitive clients. What I'm talking about is the kind of thing we did at the advertising agency for our higher-end clients. We created pieces that when their clients got them, they were full of emotion, and it made them fall in love with their brand, okay? So you're not going to attract clients with cheap ugly postcards. If you're doing that, stop it right now, or you might be able to partner with another business that serves that neighborhood, maybe there's one right across the street or nestled right in the middle. And look, if you can't find the mower, find the mowing company, and get there before them, and wait down the street. When they start early in the morning, you can follow them and see where they go. If you live in a small town, ask around, "Who's mowing for people?"

If there are people out there in the world, paying for services, they're happy to do so. And I'm not saying be a stalker, and park a foot behind them all day long, and follow them. But look, they're showing you where the clients are, so open your eyes, okay? Second, if you can't find the mower, find the proverbial mower, there are lots of them to follow. There are tons of products and services in your market that people are buying that are not essential, they're just not. I have a client who owns a golf cart company, and their sales were triple last month during COVID, because people have money to spend right now. We needed to add a little tile in my

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studio. When we built, we just didn't do backsplashes in the kitchen, and we're spilling coffee and everything. And I told my husband, "Hey, call the local tile store."

We both know them, they were clients at the ad agency. We love to spend our money locally. And I said, "I bet during COVID they're slow because people aren't leaving home. And see if they can come over and do this." Well, the exact opposite. Everyone is staying home, doing house projects. They said they can't take people's money fast enough, right? So where's your tile store? Where's your golf cart store? Sure guys, some people are suffering. And custom artwork isn't a place for them to invest right now, and that's okay. But there are people buying new cars, expensive jewelry, sending their kids to private schools, getting their houses cleaned, putting on those long, time-consuming, fake eyelashes every single week, right? Where are those businesses getting clients? Where are those people? Go there, talk to people, they're out there.

Look, during COVID, teaching my coaching students to pivot during that crazy time, and define the Dream 100 Partners who are serving their ideal clients. Even though it wasn't a mowing company, Debra Weisheit connected with two businesses. One was a high-end hotel, and one was a high-end pet boutique who were starting to send her clients. Melissa Mancini partnered with two real estate friends who sell \$500,000 and up homes to reach out to their clients, and give gift cards, and help drive traffic. Because I mean, gosh, when you buy a new home, you have bigger walls and you need artwork. So it was a beautiful partnership. So both of these students were looking for people who have disposable income, and are out there investing it. They're in your town too.

I get it, it's easy to tell yourself that you don't have clients because they just aren't out there or that you're not charging what you're worth because you personally wouldn't hire yourself. These are lies you are telling yourself, and you're believing them. There are people all over who are making money and spending money. People are buying all kinds of items from boats to new carpet, to house cleaning, and yes, fleeting mowing services. So if you've had that head trash and you're telling yourself, nobody in your town has money. The next time you pull

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up next to a giant crew of mowers, pull over and take note of who's paying them to do that same service over and over. Remind yourself, that instead of hiring a person to mow and groom their yard, those people could have a gorgeous piece of artwork in their home that last a lifetime, not three months or five days. I believe to my core that it is such a better place for them to invest their money with us.

Okay, friend, I'm a little embarrassed to admit this, but I didn't know how to subscribe to a podcast. I know, I know, I'm new to this whole podcast world. But I figure, I didn't know, maybe you didn't know either. So here's the scoop, if you want to get notified on your phone each time I drop a new podcast, do this. First, if you're on an iPhone, open up the Podcast App on your iPhone, type in Worth Every Penny Joycast, and you'll see a tiny purple subscribe button. Just tap it, and voila. Now you'll be the first to know when there's a new episode, and it will even be delivered right to your phone, so you can hit play during carpool, your drive to a session, or during a workout without having to search for it.

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