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Raise your hand if you're in a season where even the simplest decisions trip you up, you're exhausted, avoiding every flavor of decision from what to make for dinner to whether you should rebrand your photography business, create a new logo or heck, raise the price on that 16x20 by \$13. You're stuck in a rut seconds away from that toddler in Target meltdown, and it feels pretty terrible.

My friend, I've been there. Today, I'm going to share part one of a tool with you that I use to help me when I'm stuck. It centers me. It reminds me of what's important, and it serves as a filter to help me make decisions more quickly. Are you excited to learn it? Let's go.

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 Joy Cast. 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 three. 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.

It's funny because the first many years I was in business, I felt like every day I was remaking the same decisions like I'd never made them before. I remember being asked about donating to auctions. Should I change my prices? When should I reprint my prices? Should I change my website? I still felt like I was guessing or I was stalling or I was avoiding making them. I don't know. Do you ever feel this way?

I would come across challenges and I would stew on them. Should I do this? Should I not do this? What if I hold off till later? How can I fix it? Should I just do the opposite of what I did last time? Isn't that how we do it? Right? Like, "I did this last time. I don't know if it worked or

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not, but let's try the other way. What if I totally make the wrong decision? That's terrible, too. Could be bad repercussions. People could laugh at me or talk about me."

So, I think what a lot of us do is we just get paralysis by analysis, decision fatigue, whatever you want to call it. We just kind of shut down and we avoid making important decisions. I heard my selling coach say recently, and I loved it. He said, "More money is lost because of indecision than bad decisions." Think about that.

It's funny because every day we make so many decisions, but we put off so many decisions, usually the important ones. Like, "How can I make major changes in my life or in my business?" Decision fatigue, it really is a thing. This is why as an entrepreneur, I know this. We have to make decisions all day long. So, I try to simplify my life. I simplify what I wear each day by purging my closet and trying to keep it clean and simple, which I'm not always good at this one.

I literally eat the same thing every day for breakfast, so I don't have to think about it. Eat an omelet with cheese and avocado if I have one or half of one and a hot tea. Boom. Easy. I eat a smoothie for lunch most days. It's as easy as it can be.

Simon Cowell, do you remember him from American Idol? I love American Idol, by the way. If I ever can't sleep or I need a brain escape, I'll watch American Idol, especially the gold buzzers. They're so much fun. It's like reality TV, but there are people who have talent instead of just acting crazy ways.

Simon is pretty funny. He, literally, I heard him interviewed, I think he has a closet of black and white T-shirts. I think it's black, isn't it, that he wears. Sometimes he wears white collared shirt, but he said, "I don't have to think about it. I've got other things to do with my brain."

I remember thinking at the time. Oh, my gosh. I'm walking into my closet with clothes everywhere, piled up. I'm kind of a hoarder in that way. I save things in case one day I might need them and I haven't needed them in the last 12 years, but one day I might need them. So, I'm going through all these things like that in my closet. My closet feels like it's full or

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overflowing, but really there's not a lot to wear. So, that already is zapping my decision making energy for the day. I hate when I have a zillion decisions on my desk because at some point I just can't make any more. I just shut down.

So, over the years I've created some tools and strategies to help myself make the important decisions because I know for me to grow in my business, I have to be able to make a lot of decisions, and still have the capacity to make some tough decisions or be able to avoid decision fatigue when it comes time to make a decision that I just am too exhausted to make.

If you struggle with making decisions, these eight decision-making helpers are going to be your bestie. I'm going to share four today and four next Tuesday. So, be sure to subscribe to this podcast and start every Tuesday with inspiration. I'm going to share with you at the end how to subscribe to a podcast if you don't know how. So, stick with me there.

The tool I'm going to share with you is our manifesto. I'm actually going to give it to you. In the show notes, grab this list of core values that help me make decisions, and I hope it serves you. Print it. Hang it. Post it. Post it on Instagram if you're on Instagram and tag me at Sarah.Petty because there are more out there than I'm even sharing here. That would make me so happy and we can start a conversation together.

Again, I'm going to share four of these today and four next time. So, I would get out your journal where you write down the important things that happen in your business. So, you can grab four of these today and four of these next week.

Number one, oh, and I love this one, imperfect action beats perfect inaction. Do you ever get this, that paralysis by analysis where you're looking at something and you're thinking about it, thinking about it, thinking about it, and instead of just being all in or all out, you just are thinking about it? You're stuck. I hate being stuck. Remind yourself. It is more important to be moving than stuck.

My neighbor, years ago, they homeschooled their three boys and he came outside. I think they were playing catch and he said, "All right, boys. Let's go do something even if it's

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wrong." I remember cracking up so hard because I thought, "Well, heck. That's true." Even if it's wrong, you're going to learn something, but being stuck or stagnant is never going to help you.

When you're stuck overthinking or working a project to death, and you're missing the window, remind yourself that done is better than perfect. For me, when I create what we call a dog whistle marketing piece, it's that piece that attracts the really awesome client like a dog whistle, it's full of emotion and gorgeous design. I know it's going to be an investment when I print it. So, I will work it to death. Sometimes we have a time when it needs to go out. If it's an event or something time-sensitive and my team has learned to tell me, "Sarah, you get 15 minutes with it and then you don't get to see it again."

So, I've worked out little systems within my own business where I can't let perfect inaction trump imperfect action because I've done that where I've missed the whole window, and then it's like, "Oh. Well, we'll save that for next year." Paid for the design, had it already, the printer was waiting for it and I just couldn't get it done.

That's no way to be in the world. So, it's always better to get it done even if it's imperfect. Really, when is it going to be exactly perfect? So, that's number one, imperfect action beats perfect inaction.

Number two, I take action even when I'm scared, just plain scared. When I'm coaching photographers, especially in my starter course, it's called Boutique Breakthrough. It's a workshop where for eight weeks I work with them and I hold their hand to go through and get their first thousand dollar client. It's scary, right? It's scary. None of the things that they have to do are hard, but it's hard to take action when you're scared.

What I've noticed from teaching this workshop for years and teaching photographers for years, that the number one thing that I see that's different from photographers who succeed and photographers who don't, it's not their photography, it's not their background, it's not their gender or their age or anything about that. It's the ones who take action. The ones who keep taking action succeed faster. It's just true because I can give you every technique, tactic,

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strategy in the entire world, and if you don't do it, it's not going to get done. It's not going to help you.

Ricky Clark is a student of mine from Iowa, and he's one of my recent Boutique Breakthrough students. He was the fastest student to get his, we call him a Julie. Julie is a client or, yeah, a client that invest a thousand dollars or more. Less than two weeks into the class, he took action and he got a \$1,700 order. He didn't even have all of the education yet. Why? Because he followed the steps and he took action. Right? He took action. There's no other way to describe it other than he took action. He was rewarded with it.

The thing I also love about taking action is that it forces you to prioritize, right? You say, "Oh, I'm prioritizing my business," but then it keeps being put on the back burner. When you jump in a class like that, like our Boutique Breakthrough, you're going with the students. So, something else in your life has to be set on the back burner because this is moving to the front burner.

So, you can only act on one thing at a time, which means when you make a choice like investing in yourself, you will make that a top priority. That's just how it works. So, even when you're scared, sitting there isn't going to help you, taking action is.

Number three, failure is actually learning. I've talked about this in past podcasts and I'm sure I'll talk about this in future podcasts. I'm scared to do this because what if I fail? What if I mess something up? It's going to happen. Most business owners and entrepreneurs who are successful, well, I would venture to say every single one of them has failed.

When I hear entrepreneurs speak, I get way more from listening to their failures than their successes. I was in a really cool business program in St. Louis, Missouri, which is about two hours from me for about five years. It was called the Entrepreneurs Organization. It was a big commitment. I had to go there every month. I met with a group of eight of us. We were in little forum and we met together and you have to meet a certain sales volume. There's pretty big criteria to get in, but they would bring in top speakers.

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I remember they brought in Jimmy John from Jimmy John's the sub franchise, which was started in Central Illinois at a university here in Charleston, Illinois. It's Eastern Illinois University. So, it's all over the Midwest. It may not be where you live or you may not have heard of it. Of course, we all have watched him just explode in growth, but he shared things with us that he never shares with anyone and, of course, I can't share because when you're a part of that organization, everything is very confidential, but it was one of the best speakers I've ever heard because he openly shared his failures.

It just makes you feel so good because it makes our failures seem like, "Oh, I lost a client. That's not a big deal. I made someone upset or I messed up an order. It's not really that big a deal," or we say, "There's no such thing as a portrait emergency. We're not heart surgeons. We make people happy. We're not saving lives. We are changing lives, but no one's going to die on our table today."

I loved that time with Jimmy John, and that's why whenever I meet with entrepreneurs, I want to know, "What have you failed at? What have you failed at?" It's my favorite thing.

One of my coaching students named Jill Liebhaber, she's in my Peak Performance Coaching Program. This is my top program that's usually full. My students have to go through the Boutique Breakthrough course to even know about this, to even get an invitation to apply. It's just very invite-only because I only have so much time, and I can only work with students who are coachable and students who will take action and students who will follow these core values, lifting others as they climb. So, it's not something you can even find out about online.

One of my students who also is an assistant coach in the program with me, her name's Jill Liebhaber, and she lives three, four hours north of me up in Chicago. She just has the best perspective when things don't go as planned. I always hear her reframe failure in the form of what she learned. Actually, we communicate via an app called Voxer, V-O-X-E-R. It's a little orange app. It's like a walkie talkie where my coaches and I, we can communicate. We were Voxing on a message.

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I said, "Hey, tell me about a failure you've had, would you?" because I knew I was going to be talking about failing or failure, and I knew her stand on it.

She said, "I just don't have any." She said, "Every time something doesn't go right, I've learned so much that I would never call it a failure."

She literally doesn't see it as a failure, and she sees what she learned, which I absolutely love. She just is the poster child for failure is actually learning. So, if you can even take a minute to think about failures in your life, you learn something, and that's like a block that you can then step up on to get you to the next goal. It doesn't pull you down. It lifts you up.

Number four for today, and then again, I'm going to give you the next four next week. Number four is I squash excuses. I know that can sound cliché. Oh, excuses, but, guys, I coach adults for a living. I see the excuses that they're making. I see kids make them. I see young people, old people, people of all ages making excuses. I've heard people say, and I love this, "You can have success or you can have excuses, but you have to pick one."

So, your life may stink by no doing of your own, and I get it. I get it, but here's the thing. In one of my first jobs, I was in advertising sales and it was so hard. I had to go door to door, basically, to businesses and I was selling newspaper advertising, and then I was selling a direct marketed magazine. We were getting into list segmentation and database management, and it was really cool, but I had to start this magazine.

So, I was cold calling, walking into these places. It was so hard, but it helped me so much. I remember it being very hard. I came across a lot of struggling business owners. I heard so many excuses of why their businesses were failing. They were blaming the economy. They were blaming their location or the weather or whatever they were blaming, that there wasn't enough traffic on their street. They had an excuse for everything.

I was young. This was one of my first careers. So, I believed them and I was like, "Oh, man! They really got a tough break. They can't succeed because of X, Y, or Z."

Then I got the dream job that I really wanted as a marketing director at an advertising agency where the clients who would hire us had larger budgets. They had to because we were

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spending and investing their marketing dollars in media. If they didn't have a media budget, they definitely couldn't afford us.

So, these were larger clients who had gotten some success already on their own. They were tenacious. They didn't have excuses. They were like my student Jill, and they would say, "Hey, this didn't work out for us, so what we did is this." They never said, "Oh, this didn't work out for us, so we closed."

I mean, sometimes they make good decisions and needed to close a location or whatever, but it doesn't stop good business owners from figuring out another way, and having tenacity. They didn't play the shame and blame game of blaming this person or their landlord or the economy or whatever politician is in office or the road crew in front of their building. They found another way.

I learned so much at that job because I saw I had come from a place where I saw a lot of broken business owners with a scarcity mindset playing that shame and blame game, and I just believed those lies until I got into the advertising agency where my clients were having the same struggles and they were getting through them because they didn't make those excuses. They squashed them.

So, this is a really great perspective. You can buy into those excuses and you can start perpetuating them and talking about them and using those excuses, but as long as you are, you're not going to be able to have the success. You got to pick one, success or excuses.

So, guys, this is four of many things on our manifesto. So, I hope can join me again next week for four more, so you can get better at making decisions because remember, more money is lost on indecision than on bad decisions. Keep making decisions and hang with me. I'm going to share with you how you can subscribe to this podcast, so you don't miss next week. You're not going to want to miss it.

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, heck, if I didn't know,

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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.

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