

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

So you're booking sessions, but the clients you're booking, aren't exactly your dream client. You're probably thinking that, oh gosh, I'm not living a fancy lifestyle. So it's not in the cards for me to get better clients who want all the fun things. Not true my friend, it's time to kick those beliefs to the curb. Let's talk about what you can do to get those dream clients to step in front of your camera. I've got seven things to share today, that you can start doing today and every day, without advertising, to make it so you are attracting and working with better clients. Let's do this.

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 was doing a Facebook live a few years ago, and I was talking about a dog whistle promotional piece. That's a huge boutique marketing strategy that I teach at my company, Joy of Marketing. And you've probably heard me talk about it in past Joycasts. But this is where I create something gorgeous that I mail to clients and prospects, that screams out to my ideal clients, that what we do is delicious and rich and fabulous, and worth more. High quality attention to detail in service marketing, which is basically what we are, because they don't know what they're getting until after they've paid the session fee and committed. But what we show in our marketing has a direct correlation to the quality of what they're ordering, which is why that dog whistle promotional piece is so important. And I just finished explaining it and showing it and talking about how important the bells and whistles are, from the special paper

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

to the die cuts to the folds, to the way that the piece twists and turns and creates excitement, and the beautiful copy and the gorgeous design.

And right there. When I was talking, as I was finishing up, someone typed into the chat, hey everyone, you can go to, I don't even know what the website was, but something like [supercheappostcards.com](http://supercheappostcards.com), and get something like 3 million postcards for a hundred dollars. Of course, I'm exaggerating, but they were saying, look you can get way more for way less. And I was thinking, oh my gosh, you are totally missing the point that I just made, whether you have money or not. If you're always shopping on price and you're making decisions to go with someone because they're cheaper, you are going to struggle. You'll be struggling as a photographer, because you'll probably be turning people away, not even realizing it. And you're probably going to end up being a struggling, price sensitive, shoot and burn photographer, because you're going to be right up front in the price race to the bottom. Low profits and low self esteem.

The alternative for this photographer, if they would have been listening, was not to triple the budget, but it was to take the budget and invest the same amount of money, but do fewer better. And the shoot and burn photographer always seems to go to doing more of things that are cheaper and that's just backwards, right? That's how you stay in the price race to the bottom. So once you realize that, no, I don't want to be in the price race to the bottom. And I do want to attract the right clients. I want to address seven things you can do to change your actions, which will then in turn change the types of clients who are attracted to you.

First, practice what you preach and don't be a nickel and dimer, all right? Stop shopping at [cheapeverything.com](http://cheapeverything.com). You've got to start valuing the businesses that you use. So that means get to know the owner, refer them, gush on them. Shop with them, take your friends there. Talk positively about them on social media. If you want to attract hop clients who value you, you want to be that type of buyer for someone else. This doesn't mean you have to have a ton of money. It just means you have to choose where you spend your money wisely and consider

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

as a boutique photographer, that you too might want to do fewer better things with your money.

Number two, tip well, if tipping is required. Being raised by an entrepreneur, my dad wanted great service and he was in the service business. And for example, when we go out to dinner, we were sort of the inpatient family, not going to lie there or sugarcoat it, but we wanted to go to nice restaurants and we wanted better service. And I love it, because he was willing to pay for us. And he taught us that we would always go to a favorite restaurant or a couple of them. They were locally owned. We would sit at a favorite table and have a favorite waiter or waitress. And we would always tip well, I say we, he, because I was a kid, but he respected these people and he would tell us, look, this is their livelihood, don't be a jerk. If you want to have good service, you've got to tip while you've got to thank them.

My hubby, Joe Petty. I don't know why I call him Joe Petty. What? Like, it's one word, but I just think it's fun to say, you can say it, Joe Petty. But Joe Petty and I were chatting with our favorite waiter at our hometown local restaurant. And he was talking about a guy who tipped him. We, and we asked him, right. He didn't just start talking about tips. But I was curious, because we always asked for him and we always tip well. And I was curious if other people did. And he said, I'm fine, he said, I serve everybody with a smile on my face. He said, but I have this one man who comes in and it doesn't matter if he orders one thing or has \$150 bill, he leaves a \$5 bill, kind of winks at me like, here you go fella. And I asked him if people got tipping and he said, no, he goes, I think he thinks that that's what's appropriate, to tip \$5.

And that's one of the reasons I added it here, because I think if you were raised with freele-cheapo parents, you probably weren't taught to tip. You probably don't even know what's appropriate. And these top sales people, which is really what they are, right there in service but they're also in sales, are rewarded for taking great care of you and having great service. They're not paid a normal fee. They're paid a small amount, knowing that they're going to generate tips. So I believe that tipping well is really required. So if you are saying, but I just can't afford it. If you go to a restaurant where tipping is required and you can't afford the tip,

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

don't go to the restaurant. I feel that strongly about it because that's how they are paid. And if you're clenching your money so tightly that you aren't willing to share it, you can't accept money with a closed fist, right? So be grateful, have gratitude and tip well.

Number three, pay quickly for everything. When I was at the advertising agency, the owners had a policy to pay all bills within seven days. Imagine that, I bet a lot of you were raised by some parents who were like, okay, if it's due in 30, we know we can go 60 or 90 before the fees start, right? No, these guys wanted to be the best clients of their vendors. And I've really mimicked that in my business. I would say, can I pay this bill quickly? Or if not, I'm not going to buy it, right? Unless it's investing in my business, which in that case, you might have to get a loan or you might have to use financing. But if you're buying something that you can't afford and you don't have credit for it, you're not going to be making a lot of friends as you know, with your business partners. So look, it does not go unnoticed, trust me. And I don't say trust me very often, but I've been on both sides of this. It doesn't go unnoticed.

So if you're working with a vendor and you are always the fastest to pay and the most grateful and the most wonderful to work for, when you're rushed and you need them to stay after they will do it, or if you need them to redo a job or come in on Saturday to meet you, no one wants to ask for that. But look, sometimes in life we need that. People will bend over backwards for the person who is always early to pay, and they are not staying open, in fact, they can see caller ID, they're not even answering the phone of the person who's late to pay or doesn't pay or says the checks in the mail. And it never comes. I worked with clients like that.

And I remember being in on conversations saying, hey, we have two clients who want something right now. We have one who pays us quickly and is amazing. And we have another one who keeps telling us the checks in the mail and blaming the postal service every single month that their check isn't getting delivered. Who do you think got priority? I heard those discussions and I realized I don't ever want to be the one who's saying the checks in the mail, when it's really not.

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

When we had our event go boutique live, we worked with a local blueprint shop and my husband does a ton of business with them. And we do as much business with them as we can. And we got them printed and I posted it with my coaching students, and one of their names was spelled wrong. And I called immediately and I said, oh my gosh, we have to redo these. And they stopped the press. They redid them. They even fixed it, because we would have had to get our designer and redo the illustrator file. It was already flattened for them. So they copied the same letter, switched the letters and redid it, and it was fine. They'd been printed and I was fully expecting to pay for it. And they didn't even bill me, like, what is that worth? I will never shop on price, in the future when I need something, if they can do it for me, I'm going to go there. And I'm not going to ask price. I'm not going to ask if they have coupons or discounts. Like they saved me in a jam.

And that's, what's so fun about working with really great local entrepreneurs and paying quickly, right? People take care of you and that's how you take care of them and how you thank them.

Number four, pick quality vendors and see them as your partner. Seriously, people want to work with you when you take care of them and they take care of you. They make you look good, right? So if you're always looking for that cheaper vendor, it will be hard for you to magically attract a different type of client. White house custom color has been my lab for, oh my gosh, 15 years. And let me tell you, I had to go through like four labs to find them. Broken promises, bad quality, making me jump through hoops when something was wrong, just challenging to work with. And I've had a lot of labs try to get my business over the years, offering to sponsor me or have lower prices. And I know there are probably many lower priced places there always are, but I love them. They take care of me, they are amazing, and I'm not ever leaving them.

Here's the thing. If you were raised that way, that you should always go with the cheapest, look, you have the freedom to change your beliefs and your thoughts, and what you're thinking about things. We always call this participating in your own rescue, instead of

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

playing the shame and blame game and saying, oh, but my parents taught me. Look, you're going to get to an age when you're going to realize your parents didn't know everything. Sure, they were doing the best they could with what they had, but it's time for you to decide, okay, they weren't entrepreneurs. I'm an entrepreneur. I have to think about things differently. You can change how you show up in the world. Always be building relationships. Look, you've got to look at where you spend your money. And for me, that's what's fun about the world, is building relationships with those people, right? So you know their name. You're not just a transaction to them.

Let me give you a really great example. Andria, who runs my studio and is a photographer here. She is so great at building relationships. And we had ordered something from out of the country for one of our workshops, and they shipped it to a warehouse somewhere in the US, a couple hours from us. And it showed that it had been delivered, but clearly it wasn't, it was a couple hours away. And this gal at the box shop where we always mail things in, Andria has built a relationship with her, knows her name, is able to call her and say, hey, it's Andria with Sarah Petty Photography and the gal knows who it is. And she literally tracked this down with the vendor. It was like DHL, and it had to be transferred to UPS or FedEx, found someone at that facility, which as you know, you can't just call those facilities. None of them have phone numbers. And she got it to that truck of a different carrier and got it to us to meet our deadline.

And we sent her the nicest note, and I think at the holidays, when we go around and we gift our vendors who are local, who help us, we will take something to her, 'cause that happened this year. It hasn't been the holidays yet, but we will stop off. And Andria and I put on a Santa hat and we go around and we thank people, right? Like, isn't that fun? Imagine if you were a box shop owner and everybody just came in and they shoved their box across the counter and gave you the \$12 and left. And then you have somebody coming in with Santa hats and bringing you cookies and singing to you and thanking you for your good work. Like, you like working with those people. So why not start building those relationships?

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

Number six, this is a big one. When there is a mistake, and there will always be a mistake, go to them in the spirit of partnership. This is what you want your clients to do for you. One of my early mentors taught me this concept, that when you have a problem, you go to your vendor, your partner, whomever it is, in the spirit of partnership. And really, I think this is great advice with anyone in your life, right? Not screaming and throwing a fit because you know you're right, and you know they're wrong. Because you likely are right, and they likely are wrong. But if you're picking quality businesses and you're building those relationships and you're not just shopping on price, I'm pretty sure that they want to fix anything that they did wrong, right?

I assume that, I assume that about them, and I want my clients to assume that about me. And I've had that happen, and we talked about it in our book *Worth Every Penny*. I screwed up a client's order, and again, you can go read about it in the book if you want all the details. But she came to me, knowing I would make it right. She didn't even ask what I would do. She just said, Sarah, I don't want you to be upset because I know you're going to be bummed, but here's what happened, and I know you'll fix it. I just want you to know how much I love it. I literally sat there when I got that voicemail, she left it on a Friday night. She said, I don't want you to have your weekend ruined. I sat there thinking, oh my gosh, I've done something right, because this was the best message.

We all have fear that, oh my gosh, we're going to screw up, which we are. That's probably a real fear, right? Because we are, but it gave me so much confidence to know that there's a right way that this can be handled. And I didn't even tell her, I didn't say, hey, if I mess something up, please let me know and come in the spirit of partnership. I just, I do that with others, and I think it comes back to you. So this is what is great about relationships, is knowing we all screw up in our personal lives, in our business lives. We all do. So if you're the first one to go talk badly about another business on Facebook or call and scream at them, or fire off a snotty email, without giving them a chance to fix it, what kind of clients do you think you're going to attract? And look, I'm not perfect. I don't always handle things in the perfect way, but

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

typically I try to catch myself, take a breath and say, okay, let's give them a chance to fix it. So just start being aware. That's the first step.

And number seven, be loyal. Loyalty is so important to me. I don't just jump around because someone else has a cheaper price, right? If you have loyalty with other businesses, you'll have the confidence to know that your best clients, they aren't jumping around either. I have so many clients that I've taken care of and they've had many cheaper opportunities, probably people in their family. In fact, they've told me so, but they love coming here. They love the care and attention that Andrea and I give them, the attention to detail that we provide. And the love that we shower them with, right?

Do some clients leave us or go somewhere else for any different reason, whether it's price or something else? Absolutely. It's a free world and I'm okay with that. I'm never going to be a perfect fit for everyone, nobody is. You aren't either, okay. Be okay with that. But look, I've been able to run a thriving and profitable photography business for 22 years, because I have so much loyalty, I have people coming back, I have people referring me. And seriously, isn't it cool to be a part of your clients' lives as their kids grow up?

I have one client whose daughter is the same age as my twins, and they went to kindergarten the same year. And she came in, every single time she came in for about the month after they started kindergarten, she was in tears. It was just breaking her heart. And we hugged, and we had time to sit with her on the couch and talk about it, because I was going through the exact same thing. And then just a couple of years ago, when my daughter was doing her senior pictures going into her senior year, this client's daughter was having her senior pictures done. And we got to sit together as I presented them to her, reminiscing about how we sat on that same couch, whatever 12 years earlier, crying when they entered kindergarten together. I mean, it was just such a magical moment. And for me, that loyalty is worth everything that this client stuck with me over all those years. And we got to have that special time together. They value it, I value it, and I value it with the vendors who provide me those same relationships.

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

Look, are these seven things going to be hard if you weren't raised to think this way or believe these things, and especially if you're strapped for cash, right? Sure they are. Is it going to be hard to stop jumping around to the cheapest solution? Absolutely. But the conversation to yourself becomes look, Sarah, let's do fewer more important things with our money, that thrill me and that help me find value in relationships with the people I do business with, and be happier with that than trying to make my money do more, more and more and more for less, less, less, right? In a transactional way where I don't get to experience those relationships. If you want to live in abundance, this is where you start with having an abundance mindset. This has to start before the money pours in. So I would start being super conscious about where you spend and invest your money.

Now, look, are there places you can cut? Absolutely. Cut on commodities like groceries. Well, maybe you want to pay extra for the fresh ones, right? The organic and the berries and things like that. But cell phone rates, gas for your car, flights, like take a longer layover if you need to. You can still be good with your money and be thrifty. I'm not saying throw your money around. I'm very thrifty. I don't waste money ever, but be sure you're prioritizing the relationships you have with businesses who put quality services into your life. Picture this, you pick great partners. You take care of each other. I literally enjoy the friendships I've made in my many years in business. And I hope when I'm old, but still working because I literally don't ever want to retire, I love what I do so much. And I have some money that gives me security. But more importantly, I hope I have a business friend group and even client friend group of amazing humans, who have been there with me through good times and bad.

And I've been there to cheer them on when they're down and vice versa. That's the picture I have. And I love being able to share this philosophy with my students, and I watch them grow. Lorie Robinson-Terry said, I am very much changed in how I shop. She said, I see value in all the small businesses. People trying to provide a service and do what they love. She's actually partnered with an antique shop in Texas and they lend her anything she needs for her store, to do her images. So guys, you don't need a big prop budget, right? And she tags them in

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

her images and promotes them as the place to get it. And she's really enjoying this relationship that she never would have had, if she would have gone to Ikea on sale day and bought a cheap little plastic stool to pose her clients on, right?

Lisa Kahler said, oh my gosh, this mindset has been a complete transformation for me. I was raised as cheapo people, but as I got older, I wanted to be more of a relationship shopper, to be connected to the people I shop with. Now I know better how to do it. And I feel like I'm finally rocking the new mindset of giver's gain in relationship shopping. I love it, Jen Pisani said, I totally pay more for the girl who does specialty cookies and cakes for my clients. They're super yummy and she does super specialty type cookies. She's totally worth it, her clients are my clients. She's even made logo cookies on a camera. I value what she does and she has even referred clients to me. So see how building those relationships can benefit you? And that's something I teach in my programs, right, is how to take these relationships and then escalate them into mutually beneficial partnerships that help you both build your business. But it starts by looking at how you spend your money and how you treat your business partners better.

Again, I'm not telling you to go throw your money around like it's growing on trees, but I'm suggesting that you pick the highest quality vendors and be their best client. By doing this, it will help you attract those same types of clients. That's the bottom line. And you might want to write this down. You attract what you are. You're telling me, you want to look for better clients. And today I'm asking you, are you somebody else's better client? If not, you have work to do. So go get started right now.

Probably one of the most fragile phrases of going boutique is that tender spot where you're fired up about the possibilities, but you don't have a ton of income coming in yet, because you haven't gotten your first \$1,000 client. The person we call your Julie. Going boutique really turns your business upside down in a good way, with new systems for selling, for marketing and for pricing. And it can really be heart-pounding and nerve wracking. Well, one of the ways I've made the transition easier for photographers is my 30 day fast track course, Boutique Breakthrough, where we scrub through your prices, your photography, your

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

brand, and your selling system, to make you fully boutique. We only open this course up a few times a year, to a small group of photographers, because my team and I literally hold your hand through the transition. A new class is starting soon. So if you're interested in learning more, go to [BoutiqueBreakthrough.com](http://BoutiqueBreakthrough.com) for our free training, to see if Boutique Breakthrough is right for you.