

Hailey Thomas

There's no right way for growing an online business. And honestly, me and my guests are more than fine with that.

Hailey Thomas

I'm Hailey Thomas. And this is the podcast that lets you be a fly on the wall for candid conversations and many lessons through a variety of online entrepreneurs who are growing their businesses based on their own visions. We're on a mission to normalize and laugh about the behind the scenes truth of achieving a new level of success in your business. This is one year from now.

Hailey Thomas

All right, you guys, welcome to the podcast. And I'm really excited to have Jolina Smithson, one of my clients and just coming to be like, just life friend in general, on the show today, thanks for coming on.

Jolina Smithson

Oh, hey, thank you for having me. Yeah, I'm

Hailey Thomas

really excited for everyone to meet you for a couple reasons. One, you play volleyball at a very high level, and that always makes my heart happy. But to you are just such an incredible like community builder, and you do it so naturally, that I don't think you always think about kind of like your magics in the air all of the time. And so you bring really great people to you all the time. And we're gonna talk about how that works in your business and with clients. But you're just a really wonderful person to know, and really thoughtful about like serving people, and you know, enjoying the people and community that you're around and that you're building. So I'm excited to tell everyone about you. So let's start there, introduce yourself, tell people what you do, and where you're from that kind of thing. Sure. So

Jolina Smithson

I am jolin dismissing and I own shapes and colors, which is a marketing and branding firm. On the main graphic designer and web designer as part of the company, I got my start working in corporate in house design departments. And my last job before doing my own thing was working for a small agency where I got the variety of working on lots of people's different businesses. And so seven years into that agency, like most creatives, I had been a freelancer, and had done one or two projects on my own. And I got to the point where several different things that happened in my life was approaching 40, I had a family member pass away, it just made me really question and think about, you know, was I in the right place, or in the best place for me, several things kind of stacked up. And I just decided it was time for me to work full time on my own and see how it might work out. So that's kind of really how I started shapes and colors. What year was that? What year was your first year working for yourself? I would say, full time I began in September of 2019. I had officially registered my business in 2016. And had kind of done things off and on since 2009. But really started to make it more official in 2016 made some money over 2016 1718. But never really treated it like a business that had to pay my bills. Yeah, it was always like, well, if this sounds fun enough, and I want to take the time to do it, I'll do it. But in September of 2019 that was when it became real and it had to

officially pay off my bills going forward.

Hailey Thomas

Yeah. So I love that you kind of like walk this line between, like you are a creative and you allow a lot of spaciousness, for introspection and for inspiration and like that's a part of your world. But you're also just like, Alright, we got to get down to brass tacks here, like Posey paid is just we need money in the business. Let's go.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah, I'm super practical. Sometimes people don't think about this when they meet me. So I hosted a 200 person in person group called creative mornings for three years in the city where I live in Richmond. And every single time I was so terrified the night before that I could barely get to sleep. Some days, I was shaking, walking up to the stage. However, once I got into it, it was the best part of my entire month. I have taught before I've spoken in front of crowds before I'm never not nervous. I mean, I'm probably more nervous around money and financial. I've always been somebody that had like four jobs. Like from the time I could work, I was like a restaurant worker and then I would like take kids to soccer or babysit or I would side hustle things that I found at yard sales over the weekend. So I've always had like a money motivation like I always want to I like the idea of having multiple streams. My first job at an electronics company, I was fired, not fired, but let go because they were downsizing. And in my mind, that was like the career I was going to retire in because it was during college and I was like, I have a corporate job. I'm going to stay here forever. Yeah, so after that experience, where like that rug got pulled out, I was like, You know what, I'm just gonna always have some options. So always kind of been a money making money attracting kind of person, always willing to work never beneath like the coffee shop job or cutting somebody's grass or picking out weeds or whatever. Like, I'm open for that. So that's probably my biggest anxiety inducer is not feeling like I'm gonna have enough money. The other stuff. It's uncomfortable, but it doesn't make me not do.

Hailey Thomas

Yeah, I think that's a really good, what I heard you say was kind of taking the time to understand what are the pieces that create discomfort? And what are the pieces that create terror? Or even just like high levels of fear or anxiety? And is the ROI like the potential? Is that enough for you to act anyway? Right. So like business ownership is one of those things that even though you had a lot of anxiety around money, and how it works in your ability to have it and be the one conducting kind of the orchestra of where money comes from, the reward outweighed the risks for it. And then even in that, though, it's not just like, Okay, well, reward always risk. Let's just do whatever you're still like, Okay, how do I help myself in this process? Let me come up with my bridge, fund money and like, play with the numbers to a point like there's a point that I think is helpful as a reminder to your brain of like, yeah, there's plenty here. It's fine. Like everything is okay, let me look at the numbers. Everything's fine. It can dip over into that part of like, obsessively moving pennies around.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah. And you're also making me think about all the little steps that I've taken

years before I became a business owner. So I live in a city that's very affordable, I live in a part of the city that is the most affordable for creatives. I wouldn't say it is now because the housing market is not not sure. But when I bought my home, I had been looking for probably five or six years in the neighborhood where I was renting apartments for a home that was a size and a mortgage payment that was close to what I was renting for. And people were like, oh, but on paper you can afford. I was like, No, I know what I want. Yeah, so I just kept looking for what worked for me before I launched, like I said, I had started to pay off debt. I really looked at what are all the little onesie twosie subscription things that I've signed up for that I don't use. So are really contracted on a lot of that. I started to really get kind of militant with like what I was spending on, I used to go to shows two or three times a week, pre COVID. Let's go back to that time. But you know, I used to do stuff like that. And you're out at shows you're buying food and drinks and all these things. And on a corporate salary. Yeah, sure, you have a little more wiggle room. But I was like, you know, let me maybe not indulgent some of that for a while to see if I can put that aside. So I sort of right size, my living expenses, and my life expenses before business ownership just so that I didn't have as much to feel like I had to make up.

Hailey Thomas

Yeah, so really, what you were doing was just changing. And you and I will get into like our work together and like mindset stuff around money. But the other part of the equation that you can shift around is the circumstance it is the like, how many dollars are being spent, right? Like you can change all those things. And I think one of the more powerful things of all the things you said that theme is this, like personal responsibility. So I've talked about another podcast episodes, but like this radical, not radical and that it's so new, different. But you're like, Listen, here are all the things I'm willing to do to lower my cognitive load to lower my stress to lower, like, I'm willing to take responsibility for all these things so that when I'm ready to leave or make a step I can do so again, it's not going to be magically comfortable. And like I'm going to keep doing it until it works out because that's not going to happen. But I'm going to make it as easy for myself as I can to make this step over. So we talked about like through September 2019. And I want to talk about briefly like what your first year in business was like and when we met and why you were like, Oh, I might want to work with her.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah, so I would say the first year was surprisingly easy, because I had taken a lot of steps to help me be successful and not easy as than like the money just flew in. Or like I was never uncomfortable. But I guess I was just so terrified of what it would be like the fact that I could actually pay my mortgage and other bills and eventually like start to add back in. Hulu and eating out like that was like oh my gosh, look at me. I'm so fancy now. So it was steady. So started business COVID hit, I was terrified. So there's a couple things I took like a 30 day brand bootcamp for people trying to build their personal brands from an influencer that I follow that helped me really understand better how to show up as me as the business owner, I think the visibility part of running my own business was not something I'd practiced a lot having worked for other people. So that really helped, which will lead into our chat about attraction model marketing. But that was the first time where I felt like, Oh, I understand how to do this and not play a character. Yeah, I can show up

as me be myself, say what I do, say what I believe in, say, who I'm for. And there was just so much anxiety around like, Are people going to ridicule me? Are they going to understand me? So sort of like that anxiety of walking into a room of strangers, I just felt like, I've never shown my face in this way as a business owner. So what am I going to walk into about doing that. So that was a big piece of it, getting that practice, then COVID hit all in person networking shut down. And most of my business was coming from relationships and people that I knew in my community. So that terrified me as well, because even though I'm part of these groups, and businesses, now, it's all like, go home, everybody, you can't be around each other. So I started a networking group that really became such a system of support from other business owners, it was an all virtual group, it was free, because I didn't have a lot of money myself to join other networking groups, there was no requirements to be there, because I didn't know if I would even be able to be there every week. So I just wanted to make it an open container to invite people. So that was a great thing. And then just over time, the clients that I was getting continue to work with me or they would refer people or people in that networking group who would meet me would say, you know, I have a client that may need something like this, or maybe you could look at my website, or I don't work in that particular platform, can I send that person to you. So just from building those relationships, things grew really organically and they continue to go up and up and up. Over time, I was learning, I was trying things out trying to figure out how to like balance my books, and what business accounts to have all the things that you have to figure out as a business owner. But the money was coming. And it felt like I was growing in a good way. And I would say what brought me to working with you. I mean, there were multiple, multiple things. So I am a first generation entrepreneur. Both parents worked in jobs until they retired, and they got their retirement, they value stable, predictable. So like number one, being a creative was a little bit off from what they would have probably wanted for me, but they knew that I loved it. So they supported that. But having a corporate creative job was more stable than me the person running the cream rises, right?

Jolina Smithson

So definitely a first generation entrepreneur. So you had talked about that to your for which I am, I have been an employee all of my life. And I have worked for other people. And always have the sense of like, well, if it were my place, I would do it this way, which is easier said than done. And I think what you had talked about was helping you build a business that you actually wanted to be in and not something that would run you to the ground or just repeating a model you had seen because that's what you'd seen in your previous work life. Back to the money thing. In January, I guess it was December of 2020, after having followed a lot of your content, because I think we met through a virtual conference the very first time Yeah, and seeing all the content and like the tidbits that you share that are so helpful and so valuable. The trigger the pain point for me was my December was the busiest I've ever been. I brought in a contractor I paid a bunch of taxes. And then in January, my profitability tanked. And I saw red, and I was like, Oh, no, we are not doing this. So I know you have talked a lot about you know, creating the results that you want and being intentional about your business. So I had that going on in my life. Like where I knew things were going well, things were good. And then I reached a certain point where I was like, Okay, why is this not profitable? What's the logic behind how to fix this? So that was one part of it. You had posted at some

point about your like instinct to work a lot during grief. And that hit me like I remember reading this post that you had written and like bawling my eyes out and being like, Oh my gosh, here's a person running a business and like acknowledge grief and acknowledging true emotions. So that was one. And then you had like a booty based dance celebration, client hitting a milestone on Instagram. And I was like, I feel like she would be a great coach. And then I think I saw you post something of you in uniform and realizing that you play middle, which is the position I play in volleyball and being like, Oh my gosh, I'm just in love with this person, like, we have to be best friends, we have to work together in some way. So there were just multiple things. But I think personally, it was that pain point of like, not being profitable at the level, I felt like I could be that drew me to like, make the decision and the commitment to hire you. But there were multiple things that I saw, where I just felt like I got so much from your free content. So this is another thing too. I'm a very slow buyer myself. And so I like to feel like I know, like and trust the person on a deep level before big investments. So that's sort of the way I conduct my business as well sort of in an attraction model way. So I don't know, if you would say you practice attraction model marketing,

Hailey Thomas

we need to define this, I think for the listeners, because you and I talked about this within our coaching conversations all the time. But I would say it's attraction model marketing, in that the two points to it are the connection. And then when there's a pain point, you're like, obvious top of mind to be the person to call, which is how you've been like growing your business this whole time. And again, you do it so strongly. And I think now more and more and more deliberately, that it feels very natural. So yes, I technically practice attraction, model marketing, but it hadn't have a name for it until you and I talked. So can you talk a little bit about how were you able to continue to plant seeds, when your first full year of business was during a pandemic, and the method in which you were doing it before you didn't have access to anymore? Which was going to go meet people? So how did you find out what's going on in your thoughts that allowed you to continue that without panicking, without rushing relationships without feeling desperate, and that spilling out into your business? Yeah, so

Jolina Smithson

I would say for me, the attraction model marketing is being seen and being known. I usually pick a word of the year, and a phrase that I picked at some point was show up. And I want to say it might have been a couple years ago now, but I felt like I was not showing my face or like claiming things that I'm good at, and doing that visibly. So I think of it as showing up as yourself telling your truth, sharing how you work, what you think, what your values, what your beliefs are. And again, as a business owner, I'd never really done that. So I was like, Okay, if I say in my social media, or in my newsletter, that Black Lives Matter is all my business is gonna dry up. You know, like, that was a question like, what are people gonna think about my personal values and beliefs, especially on a topic that is really important and can be polarizing, depending on where you sit in the political spectrum. And this brand course that I mentioned, in 2019, the woman taught this model of you need to just show up, you have to just show up, and she was like pickup channel, get used to it, make mistakes and tell the real story, like tell the human insecurities that you have, like, be okay with that, because that is going to create more of a

connection. And I don't know that she labeled it necessarily in that way. But doing that course, got me into the actions of showing up every single day in my Facebook business, and trying to not have it be like, here's how you make a logo every day. Like no one cares about that. Yeah, but saying like, Man, it's been a really rough week like, and here's some things that I'm trying to focus on to get through the week, every now and then, like, Hey, I got a new client, I'm really excited. So kind of sharing what was going on in the business kind of sharing my mindset sharing beliefs. And I think the way that I, I don't know, this is probably the way that I communicate a lot. There's like personality tests that you can take, I think I'm a mediator. So like, I like for people to feel like they're communicating and understanding one another. And so when I share things that might actually be potentially inflammatory to some people, I don't always position them in a way that's like from the heart. So telling how this impacts me or my friends or why this is important to me not saying like, you should do this or you should or you know, any of that. So kind of sharing in a way that I would if the person were standing in front of me, showing up that way and then continuing to be in community in rooms of people that I really care about and respect so that I don't have to fake it to be in the room. So part of my networking group that I started, there was a container around, like, you need to be here because you want to get to know one another first, and help one another second, knowing that business will come in the end, like it will happen over time. Because I'm a slow buyer, I sort of sell slowly as well. So for me, it's not something where I'm creating anxiety around it. And I never want my clients to feel anxiety about choosing it either. So I think I try to just share my story, share who I think I can help. Even sharing who I don't think I can help. Because I think that takes the pressure off for people to know that I'm not going to try to make you a fit for me as a client no matter what. And then just, you know, sharing and sharing client successes, sharing pain points, sharing how my work helps me. So like, how do I brand myself? How do I market myself? And that was part of this course as well. Like, if you're going to sell something you dang sure better be part of it. Like, yeah, you need to, like drink your own Kool Aid a little bit, like a client of your own.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah, or like a student of the concepts that you claim to be selling to your customers and clients. So I try to think about like, Can I be of service? Can I be kind, can I just be a nice designer that someone in this room now knows, like, I don't know that they're ever going to hire me. But like, a lot of times we start businesses as a reaction to things that we didn't really like, when we worked for other people are what we've seen in the market. And you know, as a college student, and as an early graphic designer, I just felt like, so many people in the design world would talk down to me, and they would act so aloof, and they would dress a certain way. And like if you didn't know certain things, you weren't cool enough? And I'm like, Nah, like, everybody has the ability to access good design, like it doesn't have to be this elitist thing. And so for me, I want people to think, Oh, she wasn't stuck up to me when talking about design, or like if someone calls to say, I want a logo at this price, and it's like, really insanely under priced. I try not to ridicule that person and make them feel bad for not knowing what things cost. But how can I turn that into a learning opportunity? Again, not talking down to people, but you know, actually, this is the process? And here's why. Or if people ask you like, why does stuff cost like this? Yeah, knowing how you work and knowing

why that is. And you know, just trying to be respectful. I mean, I've had clients that were referred to me because they got estimates from people. And they just didn't understand what was in the estimate. They literally didn't understand the words. Yeah. And so I said, Well, you know, I'm not going to be cheaper, but I'm happy to be a resource for you for you to understand what you're buying. So I can give me 15 minutes. That's it, but like, I'll read through this with you and help you understand what you're going to get. And so by the end of the call, the person was like, I don't think they listened to me. You've listened to me, send me what you got. And they ended up being a client and paying me three or four times what their estimate showed, but I was willing to just be helpful. So I think, the way I try and approach it, and I think about in my marketing, how do I share things that are helpful, even if the person doesn't hire me? Because if they think like, Oh, I remember that nice person that does that thing. It might be three months down the road a year down the road, three people removed, they're telling my story for me, I don't have to know all the people, I just have to create that nice impression that will continue to grow.

Hailey Thomas

Yeah, so I what I heard from you is a couple things. One half of this is like you were and have been caring for yourself, financially and mentally emotionally, like all the ways caring for yourself, so that you were not requiring other people to do it like you when you are showing up. In lack. Like if you were like if you didn't for you create that bridge fund. And if for you You didn't know very specifically how you wanted to interact with people and were interacting with yourself like that, like not putting pressure on yourself and not forcing yourself to be a faster buyer than necessary. So if you were in lack and hadn't done those things, you would need that from other people. Like you, I need you to fill me up, I don't have money. So I need I need clients, I need someone to validate my business, but you done the work to be full and sufficient and coach speak but like to be sufficient, so that you could show up in service and not show up like meeting things from people. And that's like what allows the attraction model marketing is like, I'm good. Yes, I have a business around and I have services to offer and all those things. But if the person directly in front of me today doesn't become a client, it's not an emergency. It's not a crisis. So I can sit with them and be with them because I don't need anything from them right now.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah, I mean, something a word that came into my mind that I always try to consider is invitation. Like when I show up, it's an invitation to engage with me to join in on my client list to have a call, it's an invitation. And then I like try and step back and let the other person make their choice. Like, I don't ever want to feel like I'm chasing, like I'm pushing, like I'm shoving sales are free coupon codes or any of any of that mess, like I don't, I don't want to participate in that I do want to show up, make it look like you know, shapes and colors is a fun place to work and a fun person to work with. And you're gonna get a lot done, and if that's cool with you, like join us, but if not, it's alright to and I'm happy to connect you with somebody who is a better fit. Or just say, you know, it's not the right timing, and that's okay. And in with every no that I get, I always want to make the person feel honored and respected whatever their reason is, as well, because I've been in that position of like, ooh, I didn't know what I was asking for, I can't quite afford

this yet, or whatever. And I've had service providers, like kind of slam the door in your face, like you should have known better. And then I've had others say, like, you know what, we are here, when you're ready. Like, this is how we do it, we know you're going to love it, it's cool, if it's not the right time. But you know, when you get to that place, like we're so excited to talk to you again. And that that's how I want to leave conversations, people just out of respect for them and, and respect for their decision making. Like that's another part too. I'm a business owner, pretty close to when I started, I have to be very careful about how I spend my money. And so when I'm working with other business owners, I want to honor that as well. And I try to inject some of that value system into some of my marketing. So people don't think I'm going to be the agency that just tacks on three zeros, because I think I can

Hailey Thomas

Yeah, so that's attraction model marketing, like one on one the basics. What were you thinking in December of 2020? That's when you and I had our first conversation about working together and you saw profitability, like, Oh, I don't like that that's an outcome. I don't like it. I want something different. Why wasn't your instinct to hoard money? Because coaching is not cheap. And it's an expense and you chose to create new results versus like, well, now's not the time because my profitability is not where I want it to be.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah, I mean, I think part of it is what I talked to my clients about, like you can learn how to do WordPress design, but how many hours are you going to waste not doing the thing you should be doing? If I already know WordPress design, so for me, it was like, okay, Haley, can and has coached people, I have a friend who's worked with you before, she talked about her financial results in her business. And I'm like, Well, if Haley can help me, like, turn the ship in the right direction, I'm gonna more than make up for the investment. And it was kind of like, was I ready for the time commitment and the action commitment moreso than the financial commitment, because like, my profitability, numbers were not where I wanted them. But I had plenty of money in the bank to be able to still afford things. It wasn't like I was in the red in the bank. And again, this is why there's accountants, and I'm not in charge of things. Because I don't know how you are like low and your profitability, but you still have money, but whatever. I just knew the chart in my accounting system, I did not like the story, it was telling me so I wanted to change that story. And I just knew that if I were to be working with somebody on a close basis, like with coaching, I love the fact that you've been an athlete, I love that I knew people you have worked with and they all have wonderful things to say. And I also just like your demeanor and your delivery with a lot of things I've heard you talk about in your webinars and things or even in talks and conferences. You speak like true, sometimes hard information that can like make you feel a kind of way, but you always deliver it in a kind, very even way that's like empowering to the person listening. And I don't know if you would call that necessarily a feminine delivery, but I knew that you weren't like a aggro like you can do it all the money kind of cuts like I wasn't gonna get yelled at, in my sessions. Like, I know you weren't necessarily going to be like pulling on strings to like make me cry every session. I just like your emotional delivery is very even tempered. And that's how I am too. So that that was part of it for me too.

Hailey Thomas

Yeah. Oh, that's so interesting. I don't think I've ever thought about my delivery except for the fact that like the the job of a coach is to say things that people probably don't want to hear. And so I'm like, what's the best way to say this in a way that allows them to act on it and not feel like stuck by it?

Jolina Smithson

Yeah, I mean, I think your delivery is like a caring neutral. Yeah. So there's room for me to have my own feelings and process it and not interpret what you're saying as a criticism, or a scolding in any kind of way. Because, I mean, I know it would be a vulnerable journey to be like, let me open up all my stuff in my business. Oh, yeah, look in my, in my underwear drawer and like, Yes, tell me this stuff I need to do differently or encouraged me in the direction that might help me because I would not say that you tell me what to do, ever. But we have conversations that are exploring ways of thinking and ways of working. And I just appreciate that.

Hailey Thomas

Yeah, that's awesome. And I love like, this goes back to something you said earlier, which was, I can still feel scared. But I want to make a different decision. I want to see different outcomes. And coaching is just a tool through which I can do that you weren't like, Oh, my gosh, Haley saved me this is all you're like, no, I got it. But also, I want this to be different. So I'm going to use this tool to do that. And the risk outweighed the downside enough, and you trusted yourself enough to be able to take action with coaching. We're going to get in your underwear drawer a little bit, we'll see how comfortable you are with us. So let's talk numbers a little bit. Give me Let's see, it is May of 21. And we started working together in December. So how much money have you made in your business since we've been working together?

Jolina Smithson

So I think our official first call was like the first week of January. So January to today have made \$51,000 in sales. That's so fun. Because you know, I had to look oh, yeah, here at this time, I was at 33. That's so fun. So my red, like downturn for profitability jumped up? And I'm like, I've been profitable since the end of January. Yeah. How did that happen? Like, how do you think that happened? So some of it we talked about in our first sessions, it was like, sometimes business will have this. And this does not mean anyone screwed up. Yeah, I think January was like paying a contractor that helped me do a lot of work in December, paying the taxes on all of that work, re upping subscriptions. So some of it was just like, this might look like this in January, because this is when some expenses will hit. So like, don't freak out in next year, if like this is still going on, because I had never been through a full calendar year business. So that was a good positioning, but then the profitability. So some of that was like all these expenses hit in January. So they did not some of the yearly expenses did not hit again, I pulled back from using the contractor, just to like reassess like, was it necessary with the volume you and I talked about? pricing. So I upped my pricing. The day that we talked, the next day, I met a new client who hired me on the spot at the highest rate I'd ever been paid since January, we have continued to raise my pricing. And that client hired in January also hired me for a deeper engagement at like a 50% price increase from the number they got in January. And their biggest concern was you're not firing us,

right? Because whatever it calls, we're just we're in. Yeah. So there were multiple things it was it was making sure that I'm pricing, what I'm offering properly to have enough room for all of the operational things and the tax thing. So it was like the logistics of the pricing. But then we also talked about what is an offer, and what is a big enough commitment for clients to get the best results from me. And for me to feel the most stable revenue and be able to serve them in the best way. So it's like thriving for them thriving for me, thriving for the business, and two of my clients. So one signed up that January client signed up for that in March. And then a client I've been working with since I founded my business in 2019. at a much much lower rate. So I don't have to look at the number increase that he got. But again, was just like, this sounds like such a great idea. And I'm in and by the way, charge more yes, some aspect of it. I mean, these are the things that people are saying to me. So I definitely feel like I have attracted a roster of people who are the right fit for me. And I think our work together has helped me create some financial results that will just guarantee that I can continue to grow and serve and learn. And I mean, like as I grow as a business owner, I have larger files and I've got subscriptions to all these Creative Suite programs that I need and the world is changing and I'm in technology so I need to stay up to date. So some of the revenue increase in my mind while it feels like ooh I don't know if I should charge more these people have paid this or that. I know that that helps Invest in me improving my business over time me staying around me learning more to continue to serve them better and staying up on trends. And that's the type of person I am. Anyway, I love learning and I love taking workshops, whether it's a one off training or like a week long course, I love that I have room in my financials to be able to support that and not feel like oh, I'm not allowed to spend this money because I don't have enough room. Or if a client really needs something, I can afford to hire an expert to take on a piece of a project. And I'm not just scraping from one paycheck to paycheck to be able to see if that work.

Hailey Thomas

And that's like the important thing. And I want to ask about how you get out of, you know, scared versus terror with the price increases we're talking about because they were significant for you like they were pretty significant price increases. And I know that created a lot of discomfort for you. That's the point of it, right? Like the point of it is so that you have enough space to thrive not just get by, but so that as you need more subscriptions as you want to hire help, as you want to take a break as you want to learn new stuff in your industry, like all of that is baked into the price. It's not just about what's happening right here in front of you. Yeah, and I

Jolina Smithson

think so what we talked about were jumps that were out of my comfort zone, because I think from the time I've been a designer, I've always kind of practiced this idea, like go up \$5 every three months or go up \$10 every new big project because the clients will call each other. So I'd always kind of done that sort of changing, but you were just like, let's think a year from now, let's think six months from now, is this \$10 increase going to be enough? No. So let's think about what's that bigger increase, I think it was more just like shock, like, Oh, I can charge that. That was really more the thought not so much fear or tear of telling people. And with many coaching things, I think I just needed the reps, like we talked in some of our

sessions, like, just say the number seven number to yourself, say the number to your cat, work for boyfriend, when you get home, you know, your partner, like what you're going to charge the next person that reaches out to you write it down, like have it in your one pager, and just get comfortable with that so that when you deliver it to the person. Again, it's not this like squirrely? Well, I kind of think this is, you know, you just say it, you just say the number, this is what it is. And I think after having the first conversation with the client I had just hired and then not long after jacking the rate up that much higher. And their main concern was please just don't fire us like that felt like, okay, these clients are in it to get worked on, they value me enough to trust that if I'm making changes in my business, it's the right change. They want to see me do well. I mean, that part has been just really fulfilling to feel like the people that you're excited to help and serve care enough about you and your business, to not give you a hard time when you have to make things like that, like change a price or change a service model.

Hailey Thomas

Well, and I think this comes back to this attraction model marketing is that like, this didn't happen to you by accident. So someone might be listening and being like, Well, my clients wouldn't go for that. It's not that it's that you've taken the time. And we're intentional about who do I want to be great. Let me attract those people, right. So those are the people that are kind and thoughtful and want you to win. And all of those things are who is around you. And therefore when you start to make changes, it's like yeah, of course, those are the people that you brought it that's in your area in your sphere.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah. And kind of another trait that I have, which maybe wasn't the best for the people that had to be in charge of me when I was a worker is like radical honesty. Yeah, sometimes brutal honesty. And so I think I attract people who appreciate straight talk and appreciate tough questions. And they also ask me tough questions, and I answer them in truth. I mean, one of the clients was like, so like, just tell us like, Are you trying to price us out because you just don't like working with us. And I was like, that's not it at all. And they're like, okay, cuz if you don't like working with us, like, you can just say so and like, we'll find a different person. But we do like working with you. And if that's the price that we have to do, like, we'll do it. But you know, you could also just tell us, and I'm like, No, to be honest with you. My business coach and I have had this conversation. And this is just where I need to be for my business to continue to function well, and they're like, okay, yeah, we're in. So that sort of client is who I have. I love that.

Hailey Thomas

I mean, the other part of all of this is, like you said, it's honesty and as you're making these jumps in your business, sometimes we're afraid of having that conversation, right that comes through as a client that's like, ah, tell me more about this. Like, that's not actually a problem. I just want to know more about it. It doesn't mean like I shouldn't, because they're asking about it like, No, you have to be able to allow for your discomfort for other people's discomfort. That's okay. All of that is completely fine. Like you trust yourself in the decisions that you've made. And we've been coaching on these things so that when you are met with that discomfort, you're like, Yeah, okay. Let's talk about it.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah. And I think each of these conversations, again, going back to the invitation, they've all been an invitation. And I think you and I talked through, like, what is the story? I'm telling myself about this change? And what is the story I'm sharing with my clients about this change? And the invitation was, I'm evolving my business, I'm evolving the way that I serve clients, I think you would be a great fit for this. I'm inviting you to come along. It's okay. If you don't, you know, and it was sort of like positioning in that way. That's like, there is no Can you or can you not pay a higher price? That wasn't the question. It was, I'm going over here. You can come with me if you want to, respectfully, but it wasn't a whole lot of wiggle room of like, Can we discount it? Or can we go back to how it was or just stay put it was just like, this is what is changing. And I invite you to come along to be a part of this. And it's cool if because I've had a client or to reach out that worked with me from a year ago that really just needed a couple little things. And I positioned the offer to them as well. Like, here's how I'm serving people going forward. It's okay, if that's not the level of service you need. But this is the way I'm working. And they were like, Okay, well, thank you. Yeah, right now, but you know, best of luck, and no shade, no, like hard feelings out of it. So it's been cool to see how even in just like client conversation, I'm trying to practice that attraction of like, it's gonna be awesome, we're gonna get a lot done. I'd love it. If you came along. You know, this may not be your journey. So it's alright.

Hailey Thomas

Well, it's like when you host a really awesome party, and you're, you're excited about it. And you know, the person in front of you is like, you're gonna have so much fun. There's this friend here, she or Claire is amazing. You need to talk to her. And we're gonna have these cocktails, which I know are your favorite. So if you're free, like you should come like, this is a good time you should come. But if they say no, you're not like, Woe is me. Everything's gonna collapse, like, no, it's fine. It's still gonna be a really dope party. So you should come but like, it's not a big deal. If you don't, that's okay, too. Okay, so we're getting toward the end of our time. And I want to ask a couple of questions. One, if you had to choose just one, what has been the most valuable to you about our coaching relationship? The coaching container? Yeah,

Jolina Smithson

I mean, there's so many things that we've worked through. And it's hard for me to choose just one thing. But I think a lot of what I am discovering is how to self coach and diagnose or question my own thinking. When I am sort of falling into the track of employee thinking, or employee operation level mindset, I have been in places where the ideas and the way that I am and how I work and show up wasn't always appreciated, or wanted or encouraged. And so now, I know that my best clients want exactly what I have. And they're happy for all the ways I work and show up and do. But that also requires me to not just wait for inspiration, or wait for instruction, like I've got to make the things occur. And I don't know, I've heard business ownership called it is like a crash course in self development, like all your stuff comes out. And so I think for us, kind of recognizing maybe things that have been said to me or like ways of thinking that were sort of ingrained in me as an employee, that maybe are not serving the way that I want to operate as an owner.

So just sort of like calling out the whispers of little voices that will say things that maybe aren't my best and like trying to say like, Is this real? Is it not? So I think the self coaching and like catching myself, when I'm a natural way of thinking or reflecting that's just maybe not serving what I need to do right now or today or as the business owner?

Hailey Thomas

That's so fun. Okay, and then tell me you're at 51k since January, what was your total revenue last year and where are you going this year? Okay, so

Jolina Smithson

cuz I have it. I want to say my total revenue last year, ended up being \$80,000.

Hailey Thomas

Nice, which again, nothing to sneeze at, literally at all. No, it was good.

Jolina Smithson

I want to at least double that. I mean, I think I'm there. I don't know, we talked about Got some numbers, and I have like some PTSD about naming numbers from an old sales job that I had, you know? Yeah, I mean, I would love a nice 240. That'd be great.

Hailey Thomas

Yeah. Oh, yeah, we're gonna get there. It's not a big deal. No problem. Y'all can't see us. But this is how it goes in our coaching sessions. As I say, I think of Angelenos face goes

Hailey Thomas

as I can, like, see your brain trying to like integrate this like, Yeah, okay. Yes, yeah, that's where we're going. Okay. And then lastly, can you tell everybody where they can find you online where they can learn more about your work and how they can connect with you for a really high quality, amazing design work?

Jolina Smithson

Yeah. So I think the easiest is to just go to my website, Joe lynda.com, j. o Li nda.com. And that's got links to all of my social, I show up a lot content wise on Instagram and Facebook. And those are just easier to find through the website.

Hailey Thomas

Awesome. Thank you so much for being on Jelena. I really appreciate not only the groundwork, you just laid for kind of this attraction, model marketing. But also, again, I think you and I were very similar in a lot of ways, but also different in our decision making. And so I want everyone to hear who is more like you and how they make their decisions. That's not wrong. And there's space for you in entrepreneurship. So thank you for sharing all that.

Jolina Smithson

Yeah, you're welcome.

Hailey Thomas

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