

# Called to Both Episode 24 Transcript

## **Joy Michelle**

If you wish you felt more confident when it comes to your business finances and your pricing, then this episode is for you. It covers the steps that you can take even if you are not a number savvy person towards mastering your business finances, your money, mindset and profitable pricing. Today's guest is Val Duvick. Val is a wedding photographer turned business coach for female creatives with a focus on building life centered and life giving businesses. She believes it's possible to build a business that looks good on paper feels good in your heart and actually serves your life and not the other way around. AKA she is all about heart over hustle and working smarter, not harder. Val has been married for over 10 years has two sweet daughters Alia and Ivy and believes in building an intentional and faith filled life. One thing I'm really glad we got into in this episode is money mindset and the lies that we commonly tell ourselves about money and how this affects our pricing and our profit. Oh, and during our conversation Val mentions to specific resources that are completely free, I will have those linked in the show notes. So be sure to grab those.

Hello, and welcome to the call to both podcast. I'm your host Joy Michelle, and you're in the right place. If you're ready to grow your business, while also being the intentional and present mom, you want to be this show will leave you feeling inspired, equipped with tangible tips and encouraged to go after your own version of being called to both. Let's dive in.

Okay, we're here. Hi, Val. Welcome to the show.

## **Val Duvick**

Hi, thanks for having me,

## **Joy Michelle**

of course. So I have been looking forward to this since our conversation over on Instagram, mainly because I love the vision and the mission that you have behind your business. And that is to help women build businesses that look and feel good on the inside as I think sometimes we make them look on the outside or on Instagram. And I think a lot of creatives would say that their businesses look better from the outside than they actually are, you know, in the back end. And so I think a big element of this and something that you talk about a lot is business finance. And so I know this might be kind of a stereotype. But I think it rings true a lot that creatives and artists, they do tend to love the creative side of their business, and then completely avoid the numbers, the pricing, and all of that. And so today, I really want to embrace some of that with you and have our listeners leave with some tangible steps and just feel empowered to look at the finances. So before we jump into all of the the nitty gritty, can you just tell us a little bit more about you and how you started helping creatives in this area of their businesses and in their lives? Really?

## **Val Duvick**

Yeah. So I actually started a photography business in college, it was not something I had planned for, it just kind of happened, I needed a part time job and the newspaper hired photographers with no experience. So I did that they literally gave me like a five minute lesson on the settings and sent me on my first assignment. So from there, I just started to dive into photography a lot more and found that I

really enjoyed actually shooting people and and then got to do my first wedding that next summer, I really don't know why they allowed me to do that, you know, at that point, but that started this 10 year journey of kind of learning everything the hard way, I am very much a creative, I am not a natural numbers person, I truly do use my fingers to count sometimes, I have to use my calculator in spreadsheets, because it just doesn't, it just doesn't stick. So I did a lot of things the wrong way the first time and had to go through a lot of the like blood, sweat and tears of learning how to do the back end of business. And so as I did that, I started to have more conversations with my friends in the industry, and just found that almost everyone else I knew of was in the same spot. And especially with money. I have this terrible story of ending up owing like 1000s of dollars in back taxes because we did them wrong and other just really looking back they feel like very dumb situations that I was in because I just didn't know what I was supposed to be doing. And most things in college don't prepare you for that. I've even talked to people who have business degrees who, what I teach them. They're like, didn't learn any of that in college. So As a result of that, I, I started feeling like, there was just such a need for that. And I also at the same time was starting to feel pretty burnout, just doing photography. And I think that's because it really wasn't utilizing as many of my strengths. And so I am a creative I love, like the art and the, you know, pretty side of everything. But I truly am just a coach, like in the core of me. And you really don't get to do that very much as a photographer, you know. So I started looking for other options for what to do. And of course, Facebook heard me probably have a conversation where I said something that I then got an ad for learning how to become a business coach. So I took a huge risk. And I signed up for this \$4,000 program to become a coach. And it's actually true, it sounds a little bit like, you know, fairy tale ish. But from my very first coaching session, I knew okay, this is it like this is this is what I should be doing exactly how to do that. Where to do that that stuff all, you know, came? Yeah, in the end, but so kind of not your probably traditional journey. But it really is what lights me up. And it's just totally worth it.

### **Joy Michelle**

Yeah, oh my gosh, well, I related to so many things that you said in your journey. And I think just being true to like the creative side and having numbers not come to you naturally. But now having it be something that you've really come alongside of other business owners and said, we can figure this out. And I'm proof of that, I think is so refreshing. Because a lot of times people do talk about numbers and money in spreadsheets, and I'm like, what you like this stuff like you naturally you just came out of the womb with this stuff, right? Like, so I love that this is something that you've actually kind of like struggled through and come out the other side with real life experience around. And so I'm curious why in that moment where you were like, I owe all these taxes, I screwed up. Like, I feel like we've all been in various positions where we're like, I didn't price this, well, my business isn't even profitable. Like we've had one of these moments. What got you through that? Like, how did you decide like, I'm not going to close up shop? I'm gonna figure this out, I can do this?

### **Val Duvick**

Well, I think a lot of it comes back to two people. So my husband and my dad, my dad owns his own business. And I think just, it wasn't necessarily something he said to me. But just growing up around him in business, I think I naturally have the like, abundance mindset, and the all figured out away. Yeah. And so I had that as like, Okay, I know, I can do this, I know, we can figure it out, we just have to do it. And then mark my husband, and he is more of a numbers brain and just naturally understands it a little bit better. And so he helped me like we have worked together to create everything that I now teach and use in my business. So like most of my spreadsheets, he has partially built or fully built, and I made it look pretty or Yeah. So we've worked together on that. And I think it really does come down to that

mindset of just feeling like there has to be a way. Yeah, I love that other people are doing it. So I should be able to do it, right?

**Joy Michelle**

Yes, yes. And your proof of that. And I think I'm proof of that as well, because I like you did not naturally want to go look at my business banking statements. I don't want to look at the p&l I don't. That's not what lights me up. But I have grown to see these things as like just as valuable as any other piece of analytics in my business as any other piece of feedback I might get from a client. Like that's feedback. And I'm going to use that to make informed decisions. And so I think this is so powerful and so helpful. And like my next question for you is that for for the creative listening who doesn't want to doesn't even really know where to start. They want to want to know about money and finances and the business side. What is a first step or you know, something bite sized that someone could take away and say, Okay, I know where to start with this and to start to kind of like face the music a little bit when it comes to business finance. Yeah.

**Val Duvick**

So if you haven't already, I think the first step is just to separate your business and personal finances. You would be surprised how many people actually just have it all going through their personal checking account. And so the easiest first step is just to go to your bank, get a business, checking and savings at a minimum and And, and just start to separate that have different cards, make sure that everything business goes through the business accounts and everything personal stays and personal. That is a kind of bare minimum, that will make your life a lot easier step. Yeah. And then if you've already done that, I think a really good next step is to think about your money and buckets. And you can do that through percentages. So separating out your business money, kind of the the three minimum, I would say, our business expenses, taxes and salary, so what you're going to pay yourself, I also recommend having a fourth category for profit, which I think we're probably going to talk about more in a little bit. But at minimum, if you'd have no concept of any of that, like, those are the three buckets that I would start with,

**Joy Michelle**

yeah, I like this a lot. Because that is one thing that like, I do not know, by like God's grace, someone told me separate out your business finances. And so I just wanted to be legit in the beginning. And I think it was part of me trying to like prove this is a real business. And so that's something I did from the beginning. And now, I'm just so thankful that I did because it makes my head spin to think about trying to tally up, you know, what's happening in like my business account with what's happening in my personal account, like, you know, you're doing yourself a disservice if that's all together, and it's all jumbled. And like you said, it is not as difficult as people think, to set up a business account. And it's actually going to make it way less complicated and overwhelming to just separate everything out. Plus, for like legal and tax reasons. It's very important, especially for an LLC, you need to have that separation between the business and the personal. So this is so helpful. So you talked about like buckets and percentages, do you have any, like, I guess like base percentages that someone could start with? If they are especially like a service based creative, like photographer, calligrapher plan or something like that, that they should keep in mind, perhaps for as they're bringing money in? Okay. I'm supposed to separate this out, at least in three ways. What are those percentages?

**Val Duvick**

Yeah. So, of course, everyone does need to kind of figure out what theirs should be, because everybody is different. But I would say kind of the trends that I see are, your tax percentage is usually going to be between 15 and 30. I know that's kind of a big range. But so if you want to be extra extra safe, you can go 30, I would say my average client is in the 20 range. And usually the 15 people are s corpse. And so you probably shouldn't go to 15. Unless you are an S corp. And you know that that's going to be enough to cover your taxes, the business and salary percentages, those are where you have a lot more give and take, depending on how much you spend in your business. But I would say a good starting point to try would be like 40% salary, and around 30% business. And there is another, you know, 10% in there that I'm not mentioning because then that 10% would be profit. Okay, so you could you could put that 10% into those like, either into business or into salary. If you didn't do the profit route.

### **Joy Michelle**

Yeah, so yeah, well, I like the over saving for taxes personally, because then you know, I can work with my CPA, we can kind of look at things on a quarterly and a yearly basis. And he can give me recommendations as far as what those percentages would be specifically for my business for my expenses for my state. But the good thing is, if you over save, you can then see what that tax bill ends up being. And then give yourself a nice bonus give you you know, bring out that that owners draw, which is amazing. It's just a way better feeling than being like, oh, boy, what am I going to do? So you talk you talked about like that 10% profit? What does that look like for you? And why do you recommend that a creative might be like, let's do that fourth category? Because you want to have that profit? How's that different from the salary?

### **Val Duvick**

Yeah, so the concept of profit in like traditional accounting terms is whatever is leftover after you've spent everything. Now, this perspective that I'm talking about is coming from a book called Profit First, and it is really life changing because it forces you to kind of rein in your spending. So instead of hoping that you have profit leftover, you prioritize that profit from the beginning by setting it aside before all of your spending. So that 10% is you saying, this is profit I am done. Deciding that I'm going to profit not hoping that I'm going to profit. And what's really fun about that is that that is a bonus for you. So your profit bucket should be. So that should have its own bank account that you draw from, I would say quarterly, I think that is the best recurrence amount. So, if you do that quarterly, you are benefiting from your business on top of your salary. And it's supposed to be for fun. So it's not, it's not to like go back into the business and to pay for something or, I mean, you can do less fun things with it on the personal side, but I recommend doing at least one fun thing, like at least go out to a nice dinner or something with it, you know, yeah. And it seems really small. And I think we minimize, in our minds, the value of celebration and a bonus in general. But it really does make it more worth it. And even if you love what you do, you still get tired, sometimes. And when you know that you get that extra bonus, and you can do something fun with it. It just makes all the hard work a lot more worth it.

### **Joy Michelle**

It has changed. So I I've implemented this, I've done kind of an adaptation of the profit first model with with like, the five accounts, and I wasn't sure about the profit account. I didn't at first I was like, I might do this. I might not. But I started and my husband is like, we're going to do this, like we're gonna he was like really nerding out on it and was like, yes, yes, we need to do the profit account. This is supposed to be fun money. And I will tell you, that is the best feeling. And it makes me feel like I own a business. Yeah, and I'm not like an employee of a creative business. It feels like I'm the owner. And it's just so fun to be able to like you said quarterly be like, Okay, here's your profit payout. What do you want to do with

that? And it just I don't know it like you're saying it's it's actually more of like a mental shift for me, I think to see my business as something that I both operate inside of but also own. So I'm both of those roles. And so regardless of how much those profit payouts have been, it's just it's a great feeling to sit there and say, Okay, well, what do I want to do with this, and like you said, maybe we go out to dinner, maybe I buy something for the house. And a lot of times, it's something that somebody would not find exciting, like, I wanted to get like this really beautiful air purifier for our home. I love it. Okay, like I wanted this air purifier, I didn't want it to come out of like our normal family budget. And so I was like, when I get profit pay, I'm buying that. And I did and I love it. And now like my whole family loves it. And you know, I want to get another one now for the upstairs. But yeah, it came from profit pay. And it made me feel like not only am I paying us, but I'm also able to like splurge in areas that now I don't feel like that's a burden on my family to say I want this this fancy air purifier. So to your point, it has changed the game for me, I think mentally which is so huge in business and like the longevity of sticking with a business because there's going to be highs, there's going to be lows. And I think sometimes it can also help our spouse or people in our family to see what we're building. A lot of times, it's really, really hard to get someone else on board with something that like they don't make they don't share that same vision that you do. It's your vision. And they can their faith in it can wane a little bit if they're not seeing the profit and in ours too, right? Like it just doesn't feel great when we're slaving away in a business that's not paying us. And so I think all of this kind of speaks to that. Would you agree? Oh, yes,

### **Val Duvick**

totally. And I think that I think it's interesting how many people are resistant to this process initially. And it's often from just little mindset things that when you like dig into why they feel that way, they don't really have an answer. So yeah, I mean, one of the big resistances is that's so many bank accounts. Yeah, but But what is that an hour of your time setting those up? Right. Oh, but it brings so much clarity and confidence. Like though those two words just I hear them over and over and over again for my clients and I actually feel confident in what I can and can't spend and and then even I have a client the other day who told me I now have a budget line item for house decorations. And I no longer feel guilty for that. Because profit is what I am using to fund that. And she just like redid the lighting in her kitchen and living room and was like I didn't feel guilty about it. And it was so fun that my business is what allowed me to do that. And so it's just it's really powerful and Like you said, the longevity being able to stick with your business and for it to be sustainable, you have to benefit from it in some way. Yeah, and the profit bonuses are just a really cool way to do that.

### **Joy Michelle**

Yeah, I totally agree. I love this. And I think that so much of embracing the numbers, and setting this all up so that we feel confident, does also come down to creating offers and pricing that makes sense for our business. So sometimes I've seen this in, in my own students, businesses, where they, they think about the profit only in terms of like, if I book 50 weddings, then I'll be profitable. And so I'm wondering, how can we make sure that we are creating offers, and we set up pricing in a way that is both profitable, but it also is acknowledging a part time business, or a mom and business who is called to both of these areas of her life and wants to make sure that the pricing model doesn't require 40 hours almost by default? Have you ever seen this happen?

### **Val Duvick**

Oh, yes. Yes, I think a lot of times, we are pricing solely based on what other people are doing in the industry, or just not actually considering our life and our time, and, and our expenses. And so I think that we need to be approaching our pricing with those buckets from the beginning. So when you set your

price, you look at your percentages, and you need to see, okay, that means I actually personally am only making this dollar amount. So I think a lot of people and this is very common will think of okay, if I book a wedding at \$1,500, that's \$1,500. But actually, if your percentage, I mean, if you have the percentage, what you're actually making yourself is much less than \$1,500. Yeah. And so the other piece to that, I think when you are working part time, and also wanting to have a lot of time with your family. It's really hard without that clarity to know, can I actually do this part time? Or do I have to take 50 weddings or you know, whatever that is, so you need to be prioritizing, paying yourself and profiting and covering all of your expenses for that job. In your pricing, it should all be covered. If your pricing at minimum doesn't even cover your expenses for that job, then you're already I mean, you're essentially kind of paying to do that. That makes sense.

### **Joy Michelle**

Literally you are I saw I saw this graphic floating around on Instagram the other day, and it was saying like, if you if your business expenses and what you made were the same in your business, you did not you know, take a profit, you paid your client to photograph them. Yeah. And like, I was like, Oh my gosh, like I mean, it's true. We know this, but like you and as moms, I feel like we say that we value our time a lot. And we should, but it's so important that like we actually put the dollar amount on paper to back that up. And I think sometimes what I'm seeing is that creatives are they're not sure if they're profitable, or if they're, if their pricing makes sense, because it feels like a guessing game. Is there a way? Or do you have a tool or resource that someone could say, Okay, I can't I know what my services cost right now? Can I just like plug them into something? And you tell me? Am I actually profitable? Or what am I profiting I guess is the better question.

### **Val Duvick**

Yeah. So I have a spreadsheet that I call the job expense breakdown. And what that does is it lays out those percentages. So you do have to set the percentages first, but then you put in the package price, and you put in your expenses. And what's nice about it is it actually takes the total of those expenses out of the business percentage that that you have set. So you know, if my business percentage is 30% is my business even making any money after all of the expenses I have chosen to have with this job or package. And so that is often a reality check, because your business doesn't only have the job expenses, but it also has your overhead expenses. And so you have to make more from a job in the business percentage than just what covers that jobs expenses. You also have to have money to go toward like paying for your website. Yes. All of those things. Yeah. So this spreadsheet is often a really good reality check but just helps us to know Okay, these are the actual numbers. This is what I can take home. This is what my business takes. This is what goes to taxes. And, you know, am I actually covering my expenses with that? Yeah. So it's it's not a just poke plug and play where you just put your like package price in and no, you do have to set the percentages. But that's also just so helpful. And so life changing when you do make that change? Yeah,

### **Joy Michelle**

yeah, yeah, well, it sounds like I mean, each of us has to sit down and actually do the work of figuring out these percentages separate from the spreadsheet. So it's like, first and foremost, you have to determine some of these percentages. And I know for me, in my business, I had the percentage where I was at at the time, and then I had where I was trying to go. So I knew I was like, we want the profit pay to be I think it was like 5% of everything that was happening. But I also wanted salary to be 40%. But I wasn't there at the time. And I knew that and I didn't want to make this like huge shift. You know, you have your costs, you have all these like monthly costs, a yearly cost, and then cost by the job, like you

were saying, but I knew where I was trying to go. And it's like, if you know where you're headed, that alone can be a relief to just at least say we know where we're trying to go, we know where we are now. Now we have this little gap that let's make a plan to to meet and bridge that gap. And I felt better than I thought I would honestly like sitting down I think I was dreading it more than it was, you know how how bad it was actually going to be it really wasn't as bad. But like you said, there's so many mental blocks sometimes for us, uh, just based on like, how we felt about money growing up, or, you know, how we feel about money now. And it's like, so much of this is a religious a feeling and our relationship with money that I have found a lot of times when I actually sit down to look at money. It's it's not as emotional as I thought it would be. It is. It's as emotional, I guess, as I make it, because it's just black and white dollars and cents profit and loss. And that has been an interesting journey for me. I don't know if you've seen this with with your coaching clients.

### **Val Duvick**

Oh, yeah, I actually did. So I've been doing the finance section of my group coaching on a retreat in person. Because you know, we don't want to do it. So let's do it together. Yeah, I love that. And the last one I did, we actually ended up spending several hours in one of the mornings, just talking about our money mindset blocks. And it was so powerful, because it's not very often that you have a situation where you're going to say that out loud to someone else. But when someone can then speak truth over that, and tell you that it like that is not true, you are capable, you know, just having a place for that is so powerful. And if you don't have that place, even just identifying it on your own, writing it down. Because when we write something down in art, like our eyes see it, I think often we see where the light is, and what is kind of holding us back in that.

### **Joy Michelle**

Oh, it's so powerful. I love that you mentioned this, because I've gotten really into journaling in the past year. And I was someone that thought like, that's a waste of time, I don't have time for that, like, I just gotta like get to the stuff, right. But I have found so much fruitful action actually as a result of journaling. But it's so powerful to see something on paper, like you said, sometimes you see it and you see the inaccuracy of it or you see, you see it as if you told someone you love or they told you and you're like, well, that's not true. Like, let me tell you why that's not true. And sometimes I see it and it's like, the first line is the lie. And then the second couple of lines are moving like no joy. That's, here's why that's not true. And so it is a very powerful exercise. And I wondered if you might share, like, what are some common money mindset blocks that you see that someone listening right now? could, you know, run it as like a filter of like, am I am I thinking this? Is this holding me back from the profit? And the pricing that I should be at or that I want to get to?

### **Val Duvick**

Yeah, well, I would say the the biggest one, the first one that comes to mind for creatives, specifically is just that your brain can't handle it, or that your brain isn't capable of understanding numbers. And that is just such a lie. Yes, it may be harder. And you may have to approach it differently. Or, you know, a traditional accountant explaining something to you may not work, but you are capable. And if you choose to believe that you're not, then you won't, you know, like we kind of we have a little bit of that power over ourselves of if we don't believe we can do something. We're probably not going to do it. Yeah, but I just can't say enough times that really if I can do it. You can do it. I literally had there were two neighbor kids who tutored me in math for a year young More than me, like, it just is not my thing. Ya

**Joy Michelle**

know, you know what comes to mind when you say this, like, I'm too artsy or I'm too creative or like, that's not, you know, that's not my brain, I excel in these areas. And like that. I think that that lie that comes up. What I do personally to combat that is, I start reminding myself of all the hard things I've already done. So I will say you can do hard things, you figured out how to blog for the first time you set up a domain, you bought yourself a website or a template, you figured out how to like, do all the manual settings on a camera. So you can do math, like simple math, or we can use a calculator, you don't even have to know all the long division. And so when I sometimes I have to go back to the proof of all the crazy hard things I've ever sat on one side and said, I don't know how to do this, and then come out the other side and had figured it out. And that can be so powerful, just as an exercise to sit down and be like, write down 10 tricky things that you have overcome personally, professionally, spiritually, like anything. I know, I used to do a lot of running and track and so even being able to say like, oh, well, I did this many minutes on a mile. And I didn't think I could because at one point, it was a lot higher, and I shaved that time down. And so just like reminding yourself of all the things you have, you have done and really like owning that, like I am capable. Because I know for me personally, I have to show proof. I can't just have someone say like, No, you're smart. You can do this, like no, it has to be I think a truth based in the proof of something in the past. So I love that. So the the first lie of like, I am too artsy I am too you know, that's not I'm right brained or left brained or whatever. You know that that that lie? What else do you see coming up for your students?

**Val Duvick**

Yeah, I think I think another lie is that you can only charge as much as what someone else is charging in your industry. And and we just were a little too black and white about that. Yeah, and I think we forget, I mean, we actually see this going around on Instagram all the time of like the, the paperclip that Tiffany and Company sells for like \$1,000. Like, I think we limit ourselves a lot by we put this ceiling on ourselves of what we think we can charge and and I think sometimes we associate worth with that, you know, I'm only worth this. But really, if Tiffany's can sell a paperclip for \$1,000. I mean, even sometimes I think we ignore that example, because we're like, Well, I'm not Tiffany's. But you are unique. And you do have something unique and special about how you do things. Maybe you do need to work on your client experience a little bit to like help with that, you know, increase. But you absolutely have something unique and special about you that would allow you to probably charge more than you're charging. And so I think we really need to stop thinking about what other people are doing. And come back to that pricing being based on our life, and the experience we're giving and also the experience that we have, and like our investments. And so that's why so that job expense breakdown. There is nothing on there asking you what someone else is charging.

**Joy Michelle**

Yeah. How crazy is that? And I think it's like what you're saying you're looking around letting someone else dictate a price or letting the overall industry cap that price. When really it has to come down to so many other factors. None of which are what someone else is charging. And this is so powerful. And I love this. So we'll definitely will link your the spreadsheet that you referenced in the show notes for anyone listening to check out. So what what else can someone do? I know we talked about separating out the finances, thinking in terms of percentages, taking that that pricing and reverse engineering it before you think how much am I worth? Or what do I feel comfortable charging? Think about the Profit First, which I love. What are some next steps?

**Val Duvick**

Yeah. So I would say we really need to start building out a plan for how many of each offering we need to sell in order to hit the goals we want to hit. So giving clarity to how we get there. So a lot of times we'll we'll set money goals or you know, some people might even say something like, Well, I really want to be able to build a house by the time I'm 35 Something like that. But that means very little if you don't have a way that you're going to get there. And so After you've set your pricing, and actually, I would say even while you're setting your pricing, you need to know where you want to be. And you need to know how many of those offerings you would need to sell in order to get there. And sometimes that actually helps you realize, oh, maybe I should raise my prices even more, because I physically cannot do X number. Yeah, and still have a life. And so that's kind of the the magic of this whole process that I take, you have to then consider your capacity. Yeah. And as a mom, yeah, especially if you don't want to be working full time. So I work two days a week, and I am making a salary that is far beyond what I could make it any other part time job. Wow. But I had to plan for that. And, and I know, at any given time I can go into so this is another spreadsheet, which the link will give everybody access to all of the spreadsheets. So I have what I call an annual estimator, where you're just putting in each offering. And you're accounting for the job expenses, and it's separating it out into those buckets, and you get to see for a whole year, okay, for my salary to be this number, I would have to do this many of these offerings. And that just kind of gives you direction, even in your marketing, and gives you kind of the fire that you might need under your budget. If you're, you know, not really sure what like what to be working on or where to be going. It just helps you to have that clarity of okay, I need two more weddings. Yes, I could do instead, if I can't get a wedding, I could actually do three family sessions instead. Yeah, like so there's even a little bit of that troubleshooting of if you get in a tight spot, you know, I can either do this, or I can do this, or I can do a combination of these. Yeah,

### **Joy Michelle**

yeah. 100%. It just, I feel like it makes it granular. It makes it less scary. Because you've named it you're like, Okay, well, if you need 18 clients, now, you know, okay, let's like, zoom back further. Okay, now we're looking at marketing, if you only need 18 people to say yes, let's look at your conversion rate on a sales call. Or look, let's look at your conversion rate for whatever it is the product or service you think that you do. And then you actually could have a number of like, how many people have to know you exist and reach out in order for this to be a reality for you. And while that can be scary, you might say, Oh, my goodness, I need to like quadruple my website traffic, but at least you know what you need to accomplish, because so often, marketing feels like you're just throwing spaghetti at the wall, it feels like okay, I guess I'm going to post reels every single day until they burn out. And then I'm going to post what you know, send an email because they told me to email people and but then I can't keep up with that. And it's like, this just makes it feel real and not so conceptual, or like what worked for someone else. It feels like it's your business. And it's your numbers, which I love. Okay, so we'll we'll have that annual estimator link down below as well. So what is your favorite hack or tip for just somebody wanting to become more savvy overall with their finances?

### **Val Duvick**

We've kind of already mentioned it, but it really does feel like a hack to just have a separate bank accounts for all the different things in your business. And I actually take it beyond just the four accounts that we already mentioned. So honestly, because a lot of your listeners are probably photographers, I would have a job expense account. So those are the expenses that you only have when you book that job. And so especially like a wedding photographer, people might pay you six months before you have to spend some of that money, right? And if you have a job expense account, you don't even have to worry about if you're going to accidentally spend that money. Yes. So a part of my story is there was a

time that I had that situation happen where somebody had paid me up front. And like six months later, it was when I had to pay for the album that they already paid me for. And I hadn't saved for it. Right. Right. So again, there was my real life experience where then I created a system. Yeah, to never do that again.

**Joy Michelle**

Right. Right. And the album is a great example because I think this can happen at scale during the holiday season. It's like all the sudden all these brides come back out of the woodwork wanting their album before you know Christmas time or whatever. And that's hundreds of dollars in expenses that at one point you accounted for but then it got spent and that is just the worst feeling and so the same with that second shooters or outsourcing the editing Ain't that could be another cost associated by the job, which I love. So this is so, so helpful. That's a great tip. So I want to jump into some rapid fire questions that I asked all the guests here on call to vote. So I'm just going to rattle these off really quick if you're ready, ready? Okay, what does culture both mean to you?

**Val Duvick**

I think it means that God created us to be a lot of different things. He didn't just have one role in mind for us. And sometimes that means that we have a career and a job. And we are a mom. And we are called to do both. Well, it's not that he just called us to be a mom, and we wanted to have a job. But I actually do think that he calls us to those things.

**Joy Michelle**

Okay, I got chills over here. Whoo. Okay, next question. What is one thing that has surprised you about motherhood?

**Val Duvick**

I would say this is probably not the norm. But how fun it is. I think I entered motherhood, really afraid that it was just kind of going to be a drag. And I was not the person who chose to babysit. We waited seven years to have kids like there was a time where I wasn't sure. But honestly, they just bring so much more joy and fun to life. Like you actually care about things like the trees. Yeah. The cracks on the sidewalk. You know, it just life is just more fun. Yeah, they,

**Joy Michelle**

they they bring you to the moment, I think like you're saying you notice things. I love that. So what is one tool or tip that you can share that has helped you thrive in either your business or your motherhood or both?

**Val Duvick**

On a completely different topic from everything we've been talking about, I would say time blocking. It is just revolutionary is so helpful. And I think especially for creatives with our like disco ball syndrome. It is so helpful. Also in motherhood, so I time block both personal and business things. And that has been life changing. Very cool.

**Joy Michelle**

Okay, well, you might have to come back and talk about that in another episode. What is the last book that you read or podcast that you listen to?

**Val Duvick**

So I'm currently reading Donald Miller's business made simple. So I think everybody should I buy

**Joy Michelle**

it? I'm listening to it. It's so good. It's so good. Okay, um, the last question here is, what is something that you're excited about or that you're looking forward to?

**Val Duvick**

So in two weeks, I am going to Scottsdale for my in person group coaching retreat, where we're going to be working on finances. But so this is the first time taking my retreat out of the Midwest. And so we're going to have a private pool, and it's a super cute Airbnb. And I just love that in person. There's just nothing like being in person with other creatives. So before,

**Joy Michelle**

oh, my gosh, that's incredible. Well, I can't wait to hear how that goes. So for anybody who wants to follow along and even see snippets of this, Where can someone find you online? Follow along, download your resources or connect with you further?

**Val Duvick**

Yeah, so my website is Valmarlene.com. And you can get the spreadsheets Valmarlene.com/spreadsheets. I also have a profit first guide that will just kind of help walk you through how that looks. And that's about merlin.com/profit-first. And then my Instagram is Val underscore Marlene underscore creative. used to just be Val Marlene creative, but then my Instagram got hacked. So here we are. Oh, no,

**Joy Michelle**

we wish you've overcome so much. I love this. Thank you so much for being here for sharing your expertise around all things, finances with us creatives over here, and I would just love to have you back on in the future.

**Val Duvick**

Yeah, it's so fun. Thank you for having me.

**Joy Michelle**

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