

Hailey Thomas 0:00

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

I'm Haley Thomas. And this is the podcast that lets you be a fly on the wall for candid conversations in many lessons through a variety of online entrepreneurs who are growing their businesses based on their own visions. We are 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.

Alright, everybody, welcome to this episode of one year from now, I'm really glad you're joining me because I have on my podcast, one of my favorite people in the world, and the first person to break my solo episodes string, I guess my string of solo episodes, since I think October, it's been well over a dozen episodes. And so I'm very excited to have them on and to talk about money and about life and about business and all the things. So I want to introduce to you someone who is dear to me, my coach is Serena Hicks, she is a biracial business coach for intentionally inclusive folks who want to make way more money by working way less. So Serena is gonna tell us a little bit about her kind of background and her story. But what I love about her is a couple things. One is that she is so unapologetic in the conversation she has about money, and about work, and about the humanity of it all, and how those three pieces fit together and kind of go round and round and how they feed each other. So the thoughts that you have about yourself and about, you know, the thoughts you have about your own humanity and the thoughts you have about money and the thoughts you have about your work, they all feed off of each other. So wherever those are at any of those places, it's probably where they are at the other two categories as well. And she talks so unapologetically about her own story. So today, I wanted to introduce her to you and let her share her expertise and all the goodness that she brings to the table when it comes to these conversations. So Serena, welcome to the podcast.

Hi, Thanks for having me. shake, because that's what happens when I'm very excited and happy.

I'm so happy to have you on real talk. And I know Serena and I talked about this last week. But this is kind of just me wanting to spend more time with you under the premise of Oh,

Serena Hicks 2:40

she was like he was like, Oh, do you want to do my podcasts? I was like, of course. And then when you sent me the scheduling link we normally talk on Thursday. So I was like, well, we can't talk on Thursday, we have to have like two separate days of joy and fun and talk. So thank you for having me. I'm so excited to talk more about what we talked about, obviously, in a slightly more general way. But

like I genuinely believe this like changes the world in the best way. And so I know like happy shoulders happy shoulders. Yes. happy dance. Just glad to be here.

Hailey Thomas 3:08

Awesome. I'm so happy to have you. So people are gonna be able to read your like official bio in the show notes and I'll tell them all about you. But to help people understand who you are as just a human. I've got kind of a small upfront question and it is just what's your favorite snack right now and why

Serena Hicks 3:26

are small I'm hungry right now. I have a lot of feelings. Not all of them are kinda generous at this moment. Like I want to eat right now. At this exact moment I would sell my soul for pizza pepperoni pizza. I prefer a little bit of thin crust.

Hailey Thomas 3:41

Okay.

Serena Hicks 3:41

A little bit of a thin crust. I will tell you I spent 10 years in New York City so I fancy like I know my pizza. But I am not mad at a Domino's thin crust. pepperoni pizza. I'm not mad at it. I even ordered it in my New York City apartment on occasions. Just bring me the Domino's thin crust. Okay, it's fine.

Hailey Thomas 4:00

Yes. That's so that's so funny. I'm from the Chicago area. And so we have opposite feelings about

Serena Hicks 4:06

we have different points of view on what makes pizza.

Hailey Thomas 4:09

Yes, we do. But that's okay. I think we align on enough other stuff and that makes sense.

Serena Hicks 4:15

can confirm

Hailey Thomas 4:16

Yeah

Serena Hicks 4:16

I will say my other favorite snack the one that my health coaches encouraged me to eat that I genuinely love. It's called Catalina crunch and it's like a keto cereal. So like vegan but like when you're. So I'm just assuming your listeners know, keto as a healthy diet choice, but basically and I'm not keto. But it's a low sugar

cereal. It's basically whey protein and magic. And there's a cinnamon toast crunch flavor. That mostly is for lunch everyday with some almond milk and some almonds and it makes me feel like a kid having Cinnamon Toast Crunch cereal,

Hailey Thomas 4:46
but minus the like sugar crash 30

Serena Hicks 4:48
minus the sugar crash and also I go to bed when I want and I have money now. So not quite the same as when I was 10 it's better now. Like I do what I want and I have money but It's like cinnamon toast crunch happiness. Yes.

Hailey Thomas 5:02
That's so fun. So basically, I think what people like to eat a snack says quite a bit about them. So that's Serena.

Serena Hicks 5:09
like pizza or Cinnamon Toast Crunch keto cereal by Catalina crunch, please.

Hailey Thomas 5:13
Yeah, that's fantastic. Okay, so without doing like, the whole long Tell me your entire life history, I want to actually jump backwards to February of 2020. And I want you to tell us a little bit about where you were, what you were doing, what your business was like then, and what your kind of predominant thoughts were around money and your humanity then.

Serena Hicks 5:36
I was about to round a corner. So in February of 2020, and it is fun to have this conversation in February of 2021. I in February 2020, I had just had my very first ever 30k like in a month. So I sold I was 5k at the time, I am not anymore, but I was five at the time for six months of one on one work. And I sold five people over the course of three days, I made 25k in December, and then my head actually exploded. Like I was really happy. But we call it success and tolerance for upper limiting. Call it whatever you want. It was too much. And I was unprepared. And like, that's okay, this is a very normal part of the process. Like it's not a straight line. So I made 25k like the second week in December, and then I woke up at 3am like panicking is my boyfriend going to leave me because as long as we've been together, which is a whole separate but related story. I've been in struggle. And just like we met just as I was starting my coaching business, we went on our first date in February of 2019. I literally moved in like four months later, like three and a half to be exact. You know, and part of it was finances. It was like I had my own apartment and I was barely making it. He was like, well, I love you. I like you and you live. Basically, we literally lived in two buildings

next to each other. Like you bet you're spending 2000 a month basically to keep your cat's like, why don't you guys move in, and we'll give it a go. So like you're a year later, first date with Matt February 2019. It's February 2020. We very much live together. And I just made 25k. And then I had one 5k come in in January through no effort of my own. We'd actually talked previously and she was like, I got a job, things changed. I want to work with you now. So then I was like, holy shit, I made 30k and like 25 days. And so my head fully exploded. And I was like, What if Matt doesn't love me now that I make 30k a month? Which by the way, not true. never true. But like, yeah, human healthy human brain fears change. So it's always fascinating, because sometimes people are like, yeah, I want to make all the money. And I'm like, I believe you when you're doing it. Mm hmm. before you're doing it, you part of you wants to and a part of you doesn't want to as is the case for every healthy human brain that has an identity. And my identity was for sure tied to struggle for you know, roughly 3000 years. So in February of 2020, I just made a bunch of money. And I also had been doing some thought work, which I do teach my clients and certainly when I met you, but like I just integrated it. So I didn't know what really worked yet. I was like I think it might work now like it's awesome, trust me, but I didn't know yet. So I literally decided to raise my rates. I was like, You know what, I'm a 10k. Coach, for sure. And then crickets. So in February 2020. That was one of my zero income months, just not sure what I've done here. And but I was sort of like still enthusiastically newly 10k. So I wasn't like fully discouraged yet. So when I did consults and they didn't convert, it was like, that's okay, that's okay. I just raised my rate. It's totally normal. Yeah, which is not necessarily normal. That's why I was there. So I was a 10k. And I was very eager to have a 200k a year, which is funny, because that's how it ended up being spoiler alert. I literally made 87k leading up to the whole year, January through November, and that included doing anti racism school. So that's where I got like, a few \$1,000. That's for you. Look, I just want your listeners to know I have every inch of every dollar accounted for here's the deal. I made 80k in one on one coaching from January through November of 2020. I made 6k and antiracism. school it was \$1,000 per person. I had someone who said yes, on December 31, if you will, so she basically paid 1000. And otherwise, I got the other nine from her in January. So then I sold 110k in December 11 people. And so I ultimately had a 200k a year just below 200k. But I think we can round up.

Hailey Thomas 9:16
Yes, I think

Serena Hicks 9:19
and but in February, that was my plan. But I felt a billion miles away because I had 5k under my belt. And then it's like so a billion miles away like I was determined, which I think is something that we talk about all the time in our one on one coaching and I'd love for your

listeners to know there's a real thing when you're committed, you are willing to make different mistakes, because committed is very much like no, I'm not trying to see if this will work. I'm figuring out how it will work.

Hailey Thomas 9:46

Yeah. Oh, you just said like 16 things to go back on. First of all, we need to talk about anti racism school a little bit later. But secondly, I want to talk about this like thing that our brains do. Whenever we take this giant leap forward. There is you know dissonance between us saying, I want to make

Serena Hicks 10:04

make all the money.

Hailey Thomas 10:05

Yeah, I want to do this with my business. I want to work three days a week. Yes, all the things that happen. But then there's this kind of other part of our brain that we're like, okay, but if I do, my spouse will no longer my partner.

Serena Hicks 10:16

Yeah, what if

Hailey Thomas 10:18

he is true? All of my clients are going to go away,

Serena Hicks 10:20

right? I won't know what to do. Like, yeah, it's all stories that are again, it's just a healthy human brain, trying to keep us safe, which is what we know and what we've done. I can assure you Matt's delighted with my money making no problem. He's like, when do we get a cloud couch? And any listener? Who doesn't know the Restoration Hardware cloud couch? That starts at \$10,000? Now you do restore hardware has a cloud couch that it's like, you know, 10k for the starter? 15k. If you're serious, or more, yeah. And that's like, his big joke is like, but when do we have money for cloud couch? I'm like, for sure. Not yet, bro. Yeah, it's a seven figure celebration. Yes, no sooner. But my head was very serious. It was like, but but when he met me, I was in struggle. And you know, maybe a part maybe a part of what he loves is that he believed in me and saw things in me before everyone else did. So maybe now that I'm doing big things, maybe, you know, just all of our insecurities come up. And that's another reason I know that we geek out and I want to make sure your listeners understand, I think money making is a spiritual practice, it brings all of your shit up to the surface you have to solve before you can move forward to the next level. So is it about making money now, it's not not about making money, right? It's about like, in order to go to the next level, in order to make more money, and not be doing more not feeding into the toxic hustle culture. It's like we have to appreciate ourselves and

value ourselves and trust our place in this world, and that we are like divinely held and guided at all times. And I think it's easy for people to think that money is just about collecting coins. And I'm like, it's a lagging indicator. Yes, of your devotion to your work in the world and how it changes the world wakes people up makes people's lives easier, and your devotion to deciding to believe that you are inherently worthy, based on like, you're human and alive. So let's just move forward from there.

Hailey Thomas 12:08

Right? Like there's so much to what you just said that there's this, you know, additional dissonance between for you to create dollars, you have to believe in basic levels of worthiness as an individual that whatever your work is in the world to do that somebody wants it and they want to do it, you know, buy it from you or do it with you like those things are just at the base, and you don't realize what you actually think about those things until you start to like try to build a business on the thoughts that you have as well. All of that comes

Serena Hicks 12:39

putting it in action. Because yeah, hopefully human brain wants to plan forever. And I'm like that, my friends is a stalling technique.

Hailey Thomas 12:45

Yeah, that's so which my brain is like, you all can't see this. But behind me, I have a whole you know, a plan a marketing plan over there. And Cali our love brains love to get stuck on marketing. So what did you do when you had 5k? In the bank? Yeah. And in February of last year. Yeah. And we know how the story the story of 2020 goes for you.

Serena Hicks 13:05

Yeah, it ends well.

Hailey Thomas 13:07

Yeah. But like, what did you do with your brain? throughout the rest of the year, like the first half of the year.

Serena Hicks 13:13

First, I made every mistake. If I sound authoritative, when I talk about these things, I'm like, it's fine. I've tested everything three times. First, I made it just in case I need it fund. Now, this is this can be a wonderful tool. But just so we're clear in this specific moment, for me, I was like, let me put 10k away, I'll never have to touch it. Granted I had and tons of bills, it's probably healthy to know that in February of 2019, when I literally just met Matt, I was exactly three months out of being kicked out of a job. So I mean, kicked out meaning. I mean, I was beefing in the best ways. joyfully, I did not leave, I was pushed out, I was suing them for discrimination, which I stand behind. My boss had made clear to me

that as a single woman who made more than most people in the department, like that's it be grateful for what you have. Right? And my argument was, I brought in significantly more than most people in department combined. And the fact that I didn't have a spouse or a child to feed is not an acceptable reason that you know, like, I don't want to hear any more about making money. It's like compensation should have to do with value not because you're not afraid of my husband. If I had a husband, that boss would have been like, Oh, no, I don't want her to Yeah, go live on his salary. Yeah, kid, the same boss would have been like, well, she's got to feed her kid. And with all due respect, endless, by the way respect to single parents. It's like, yes, but that's not a reason that I'm not allowed to. Yeah, I left there in a blaze of glory fire. And that's when I got to start practicing everything you just talked about the worthiness. So this is one of the reasons I'm like yes, like I didn't have time to dilly dally, or otherwise, like entertain my fear of charging people. So fast forward to now I'm in 2020, and I just made 30k. So I have like 6k in an emergency loan that I'd lost taken out that I pay it off immediately. And then I've got a bad time. My bills, my monthly bills were around 6k a month just between previous debt consolidation loans, just just, that's where I was at for my house rent and everything else. So I was like, I'll just put 10k in this like emergency fund, but I'll never touch it. And then I'll just go make more money. Except I kept telling myself my thoughts were like, well, I just sold a bunch. So obviously, there's going to be a wall. That is just a thought. Yeah, I can assure you having sold I think I sold 11 seats, because I had some people who didn't realize like there's a lot of movement in December, and then 8 in January, that's literally 20 seats in two months, in eight weeks. And now my brain understands No, of course, you can sell as much or as little as you want. What it did back then was like, well, I just sold five people. So it's very natural that there will be a dry spell. So I set myself up for like, oh, there's a dry spell. Did I post a lot? Did I show up powerfully for my clients watershed apart for my clients, but yeah, exactly. It wasn't creating. I totally took my foot off the gas. And then I was like, Oh, no, I'm not getting consults. It's, you know, so so then I like began my downward spiral of Oh, no, oh, no, and my pricing, maybe I did that too soon and into detail when I wasn't actually doing so we've talked about this behaviors that create success. Yeah. I thought, Oh, no, I got lucky. Maybe it was a fluke. Oh, no, there's always a dry spell. So that was that's where I went for a little while. One of my clients decided she wanted to re up right after Coronavirus, hit, or really hit us as a nation, you know, at the top of March, which was interesting, because at the time, she paid five just a few weeks earlier. And she was like, nope, My belief is when the world gets tough, you double down on yourself. So I want to like re up and confirm and 10k and she had to move money to make that happen. That was not cash sitting around for her. She was like I'm liquidating some of my retirement fund. I was like, Alright, whatever you want, but for her, really honored me and actually was a part of me

like growing up for an instant. She was like, No, I love our work. It makes me money. Also, more importantly, in a way it felt like an insurance policy that she was like, I'm doubling down no matter what happens in my life or the universe, I will have bought this coach all the way for the next calendar year.

Hailey Thomas 17:04
Mm hmm.

Serena Hicks 17:05
So even if things get unspeakably interesting, she slash, you know, bought her insurance, if you will.

Hailey Thomas 17:12
Yeah, I love that. I like that you're kind of giving us the points in the story, because I think that's a significant one. So sometimes we don't have the belief or the thoughts about ourselves or about our work like that are productive to what we're trying to produce. We don't have those yet. And I think the great thing about coaching is that you can borrow your coach's belief, like many times in our own in our relationship. I'm like, well, Serena said I could so I guess I can and then we just go do the things. But I think with like in this in a similar way you kind of borrowed that that class belief in you and in coaching and as all of those things, yeah,

Serena Hicks 17:49
it genuinely believe we live in like a benevolent universe. And I feel like, you know, God was like, throw her lifeline. This one's getting messy. So that was that was that was a lifeline. And I stopped sort of trying so hard. But the other thing that I mentioned that I'm like, oh, in hindsight, that's funny is I had like a, here's 10k emergency fund, just in case, but I'll never need it. It's almost to be clear. It's like I was planning on the dry spell. Yes, planning to fail or not saying I should have spent it. I'm happy I had it because I ended up going through it. It wasn't like, Oh, I should have just done it dead. It's just that in hindsight, the second I had the money, I was like, let me hold on to this money. And let me plan for not money coming in, which is very different than saying, Oh, shit, look at this great shit. I did. Let's use this as evidence to do even more. How to plan for the like, drought is really different than like tending the land. And like, oh, wow, this is great. Let's leverage this. What can we learn what's good? It was like No, no plan for drought plans for drought. drought. Yes. How did that happen? Well, I mean, you just plan for it. So yeah. And hold the universe. I'm ready for drought.

Hailey Thomas 18:54
Yeah, well, and then like you said, your actions kind of back that up then with like, well, I wasn't making as many invitations to work with me at all. And it was like turned not turn my back. But I think about like literally being at a party and just like I'm just gonna turn to a

wall now and stand there in the corner.

Serena Hicks 19:10

Really good ana- it's a great analogy. There's a really different energy when someone goes to a party, you know, just looking to connect and meet people and have fun and they're like, belief is this gonna be fun? I'm gonna meet people I'm gonna be fun, which is different than when people go to a party as we all have being like, I don't want to be here and I'm scared or I don't know. And then like, literally try to like mesh with the wall. I enjoy bakery. You will always find me at the cheese station. If I'm being antisocial, but like, right, then it's like and then that experience is literally created by not really showing up open hearted and ready to connect. Yeah, confirmation bias is real. Yes. So I did that.

Hailey Thomas 19:46

Okay, so you did that. How long do you feel like you were in that mental space of Oh, no, a drought's coming. Oh, no, the droughts here.

Serena Hicks 19:54

For long enough. And I think it's one of my it's how I like to assumption so it's like I found the bottom and At some point I started doing what I practice and teach like practicing intentional thoughts. And no, I filed a bankruptcy in 2008. Like I have a history of basically being in struggle financially for the majority of my adult life, which I should mention. My very first job was at MTV News in 2000. So for all the young people listening, who don't understand, that was the hottest job, the hottest job like it's basically I won the lottery. And granted I earned winning the lottery. But like, what I mean by that is to be clear, I wanted to live in New York City my whole life. I'm in Texas, I was at the University of Texas at Austin, I applied for a billion summer internships, none of whom even responded to me. I decided, because that's what we talk about all the time, my friend, and I decided, well, I guess I'm not going to work at a PR firm like planned, but I was waitress, I was like, oh, wait tables, it will take me an extra year, maybe two, but I will save up. I will move to New York. So when we decide it's like the universe meets us there. People are always trying to like see evidence that it's gonna work out instead of just deciding I will figure out a way to work it out. I was all sad. It's gonna take me longer. But that very, like literally months later, that fall in my senior year, I opened up an ad Do you have what it takes to be on MTV, I audition, they did not hire him and being on camera. They did hire me for a paid position to do election coverage for the bush gore election, which again, is about like winning the lottery. So I created that with my mind with my willingness that no matter what it took, even if it took me years waiting tables at Landry's in Austin. I was like, Well, okay, that that that will be my path. So fast forward to when you work at MTV, especially in you know, January 2000, they paid production systems, which was \$100 a day. So a day rate means there's no

overtime. So \$24,000 Us people in New York City in 2000, which is the equivalent of 12,000. If you just for like taxes in most places, which in case you're like, is that poverty level? The answer is yes. Yes. That is correct. Like to find, I found my bedroom in a shared apartment. Ultimately, I found one for \$500, which was unheard of cheap. Like that was like everybody on the planet was like, Who are you? And I'm like, I know, I'm amazing. It was insanity. My point being that first real lesson working for such a wonderful truly company and team was you settle for whatever crumbs you are given financially. So \$100 a day for the opportunity to work at MTV is how I began my own personal financial path. So it makes sense that on and on, I would work for really sexy and glamorous companies for like not enough money. Because that's sort of the secret way in television. And certainly in New York, because it's glamorous, you don't make any money. Look at you, you can take a picture with a celebrity and you can do cool things. And on one hand, it is really cool. What's also fascinating is there's like a divergent moment in production, where people go from a production system, associate producer, producer, and producers is where people start making big money. And they usually start hopping around. And this is where in hindsight, I recognize it's just a worthiness issue. I was a bad bitch. I was an excellent producer. I just never had the wholeness the ovaries, if you will, at some point be like, Hey, y'all, I paid my dues. And then some right reason y'all keep calling me as I'm excellent. Here's my new rate. Instead, it was just always what what are you budgeted for. And then I would get that money, which was never enough. And then I pretend it was enough. And then I do credit cards. So fast forward back to me and the 2020. I've made some money, and I'm figuring it out. And I'm not there yet. And I have all of these sort of thoughts about I sort of need to hold on to it. I don't know if I'm good with money. But yeah, then when George Floyd was murdered, and we had like this huge moment, we're all in pandemic, everyone's starting to get a little more real than anybody wanted to be in 2020. And people are talking about racism on a whole new level. And it like broke my heart open. Not in a happy way. Just in a like, this is an egg. That's biracial woman. So my dad is black. My mom is white. I grew up in Texas, I very clearly remember as a kid noticing and not having the words for it, because what would you say as a kid, but the really different experience of like walking into Service Merchandise with my blue eyed blonde, gorgeous mom versus walking into Service Merchandise with my six foot tall black father. I remember even in college because I mean, this is racism 101. So my mom and stepdad, my stepdad is also black. So we lived in like the nice white neighborhood in East Texas. I remember one of our dogs died, and we're real dog people. So my parents called the basically there's a pet cemetery, they'll come pick up your pet and bury it because that's what we needed to do. And the nice Manor came to pick up our beloved dimia was talking with us. And you know, I'm sorry. And we're like, thank you. And then at some point, he's like, looking at the house. And he's looking at us. And he looks at my stepdad. And he's like, so you played pro ball, huh? And I was mad as hell. Because later my

parents are like, What is wrong with you? Why are you mean? And I was like, what's wrong with the two of you, by the way, you know, and they're like, well, he's just being friendly. And I'm like, but of course now what the implication is that this large black man must be retired because the dude just asked, you know, NFL, NBA, baseball. Oh, no, and like, you know, didn't occur to him that my large black stepdad was, I don't know, a dentist, a businessman like this, you know, Hailey, I know you get it and I hope your listeners get it. But in case anybody needs me to connect the dots, the large black man in this very nice house in this nice neighborhood, clearly obviously played pro sports.

Hailey Thomas 25:17

Yeah, there was no other there was no other way that this person could have made any money had it not been with his physical prowess, because obviously, he's not intelligent enough to do anything.

Serena Hicks 25:25

Racism, like, this is the universe that I grew up in. And it's not that I didn't recognize it. And at the same time, I had my own internal baggage based on like, I have great white privilege being the daughter of a very pretty blue eyed blonde woman in East Texas who make no mistake through her white love and privilege around all the time, and certainly as it pertained to her daughter. I can remember like having a mixed race bestie in middle school, whose mother was also white, and I don't remember what we got in trouble for I do remember my friend Monica was scared because her mom was going to have to leave work. And it was like a big problem. And I remember thinking, this is a problem, but mostly for the administration. Because when my mother finds out, we're sitting here, make no mistake, she was not pleased to leave her job. She had her own business. But like we have such horribly heartbreakingly different experiences, Monica was scared because her mom had to leave work. And what if she lost her job? And you know, where I was like, my mom's gonna spank these people. And she did to her credit. So I had such internal shame. Because the story in my head, the thoughts were like, I haven't done enough for my black cousins. For my black brothers and sisters, for my black community. I've hidden in my privilege of times, that's a bitter pill to swallow admit, in case anyone thinks I sound very casual. A lot of work, there was no pride there. It is what it is. And and at the same time, I've never been white. I've absolutely I won't pretend to have had the same experience as my black cousins. But also like not why that's been made clear to me 1000 times over and, and in ways that I think one of my favorite stories is when I lived in New York City Fire Island, just like the anti Hamptons. So I rented a house there for a few summers. And then like sublease it out to people ever the entrepreneur, my friend, and he was doing laundry one day, and there were people who'd rented like, a weekend in the house next door, and I like rented out the whole season. And they were like, Oh, hello, hello. And I like thought they were kidding. And then they were like, Hi, we need

someone housekeeping. Are you available for housekeeping? And just super clear, I shot in the face, but it's like, No, I'm not available for housekeeping. I am in fact, housekeeping, my rent. This is I threw down 30k for this summer to be here. Again, I sublease it to friends. It wasn't a personal treat, or like the implication that they literally just saw brown skin. And I was moving laundry from the laundry room. And they just audacity of like, oh, the assumption is she must be the housekeeper. And it was just like, Oh, it's all this to say, when people are having racial conversations, a part of me is just broken open. And another part of me was broken open in a whole new way. Because I've never heard. And I think as any person of color would probably attest to although I, you know, no assumptions. I've never heard more actual responsibility being taken by white people before. And I was like, we have had a turning point. Like, I was too scared to have hope, if you will. Also, like this is not the usual thoughts and prayers, dots, right? People are listening in a way that I haven't heard before. And for me, it felt like a pivotal moment on the planet as a human. And at some point, it felt like, I think I've been training my whole life for this. And I thought I want to do something like an anti racism school, followed by at least 10,000 versions of I'm not allowed to do this. I'm not black enough to do this. And at the same time, it was like, Okay, good. This is a healthy fear.

Hailey Thomas 28:44

Yes.

Serena Hicks 28:45

Can we use it? Can we use it to be of service to humanity? Are we just going to let it be the reason that, for lack of better terminology, again, I don't show up as powerfully as I would like to, for the black part of me. And by parts. I mean, my black family, literally. Yeah, so that was actually how we ended up being connected. I think, in that I showed up to Stacey payments to a group and got coaching. I think that was one of the most vulnerable moments of my life. Like, I like to think I'm a badass mostly I'm hiding behind bravado sometimes. Just remember the full body terror and I might pooped my pants moment of asking basically for coaching because I wanted to feel like I would give myself permission to create anti racism school which ultimately is meant to be a safe learning environment for coaches, or clients white identifying and or of color. In this case, it was a class of white identify, who really don't just want to like consume information. They want to like coach to clear up their brain to have one of my favorite moments was our intro. And one of the coaches was like, I'm literally creating a seven figure business and it needs to be inclusive, not a visual aesthetic. I know I can get pictures of people with color. I want my business to actually serve, actually everybody powerfully. And I was like, This is why Yeah.

Hailey Thomas 30:00

Yeah, there's this whole level of like seeing what's happening in the world. Yeah, having your own experience with it processing your own shit.

Serena Hicks 30:08
Trying.

Hailey Thomas 30:12

Yeah, processing it enough to be able to ask that question, can I serve people with this? Or am I going to just kind of sit on it? Like, there's a choice, there's a choice there, just like you had choices. And earlier in the year, when you're talking about, you know, like you basically created created a drought with that thought of like, a drought is coming like you can, that was, in my mind, a point where you went, Oh, I could have stayed with the same thought, which was I'm not enough and some variation of that and, and kind of created that. You can sit in that discomfort and choose something else. And let it I mean, there's actual emotion, there's actual like a, you know, the physical response our bodies have to having emotions and thinking thoughts that you have to battle with, and sit in and deal with. So there's an actual, you know, physical manifestation that goes on when you choose new thoughts.

Serena Hicks 31:05
Yep.

Hailey Thomas 31:05

So you decided to move in that direction to move towards, towards that stuff instead of away from those things, which I think is

Serena Hicks 31:14

couldn't hide, again, 41 years old. And for lack of better terminology, it occurred to me that I've been training my whole life for that moment. And ultimately, it's what connected us, which gives me great, great and endless joy just also really plugged me into I think my purpose because I think for a diverse set of clients, and for my white clients, like the implications are clear, it's very consensual, anti racism is baked into everything, which by the way is required for me to teach them how to make way more money by working less. Yes, they are intertwined and they require one another, you cannot actually have like, let's go back to that coach who was in anti racism school has like seven figure business, I don't just want pretty pictures of bipoc. This needs to be a safe, inclusive space. Her anti racism work is based on her heart's desire to be in connection with humans. Yes, not actually about the money. But Fun fact, you bet your acid contributed to like, right. abundance and anti racism work, literally both require creating and taking steps in safe even before we see the quote, results we want. Yeah, they both require exponentially more courage and clarity that we create not requiring, you know, I need to see this before I take that step. It's the one

we're taking, like multiple steps before we see what we believe. We can create. And then for my clients of color, like working with you, based on my experience that forever is ongoing, but also this like, okay, so I love coaching Hailey hardshell. I love giving him the challenges because she rises to everyone. But also I'm like, it's not just about Hailey, do I love and adore Hailey? Yes, Haley is a beautiful black woman, creating generational wealth in this world. So like to be crystal clear. My belief is like, Hailey, the more space you take up, the more money you make, the more so called success that you have, like it is the actual revolution. Like it is actually what changes the world, like you're thriving in a world that wants to offer you endless opportunities to feel bad about yourself or otherwise suffer. Because basically, it was built that way. Early, when a country was created, it was like don't worry about the people we're enslaving, we're really into like, blah, blah, happy. Don't worry about that. Like, yeah, yeah. So beyond backwards, and this is just the 180 degree turnaround slash reclamation. Like I don't accept what you've told my family, I don't accept that some people see certain things and have certain assumptions. It's like, despite all of this, I choose to create and serve and lavonne in feet, this world and every one of your clients does that no matter their color. That's where I'm like, okay, so for my clients of color, we're detangling internalized racism, ultimately liberating ourselves from you know, we've all been drinking the poison of racism, no matter what color we are. It doesn't doesn't matter. Yeah. Yeah. And it's always still tied to abundance, no matter what color we are, because I'm like, you can't make money if it's just about money. Yeah, I mean, I guess you can, but

Hailey Thomas 34:03

you can, but that doesn't seem to go very far. And it doesn't.

Serena Hicks 34:07

It's not a course hustle. I just can't but

Hailey Thomas 34:11

yeah, it requires it's kind of like and this is giant, nerd alert, but my audience will appreciate this, I hope but like, in the Harry Potter series, Lord Voldemort had to like break his soul up into pieces and put them in all these things for him to be able to live forever to never die. So like it literally was like this breaking of soul that had to happen. So like, you can live forever.

Serena Hicks 34:33

Yes,

Hailey Thomas 34:34

but it requires like, you can make all the money but it's gonna require a lot of brokenness. So if there's, if you want to create wealth, yes, and also not completely destroy yourself in the process, and there's really only one way to do that relates through untangling

all of the internalized thoughts. It's what I call it gunk but it's it's, it's it's a series of things that your brain repeats to itself over and over again.

Serena Hicks 34:59
Hmm.

Hailey Thomas 35:00
untangling those and repositioning what you think about your own worth and what you think about what you have to offer? That's the word. That's it. That's the magic special sauce

Serena Hicks 35:10
It is literally and it's everything. It's it's like deceptively simple when you say it like that, but that's sort of like this is why we believe in coaching. Because it's like, well, no, it's like, it's simple. Sure, it's just not easy to do, or we will.

Hailey Thomas 35:22
Oh, yeah, simple and easy are two completely different things. So tell me a little bit more, because I want to get to like the end of last year, and kind of where you are now. And wait, what you see a year for yourself and what you see for yourself a year from now. But when you went to put together anti racism school, first of all, I hope you run it again.

Serena Hicks 35:39
I keep telling you, I will and I'm like and I will I will I've had I keep it's been like a vertical list as far as adjusting my business, which is Oh, yes. Oh, yes. But it's also like, I have not put the puzzle pieces together yet.

Hailey Thomas 35:50
Yes, totally. But you put together anti racism School, which, by the way, for everyone who's listening, right, like you're hearing Serena talk about creating this the first time her business had been focused elsewhere. Like you weren't doing anti racist.

Serena Hicks 36:04
Work? Yeah, I'm just general coach, I was a general coach until God, I was a general coach until like, for sure fall. I don't like there wasn't a day that I declared myself a business coach, but it actually had a lot to do with working with you. Where I was like, ah, here's how I burned down the patriarchy. I'm raising an army as unapologetically inclusive women, folks, men, like I don't care. I don't care. Yeah, the game is you have to be like, I want an actually authentic, equitable, connected world. And then I was like, okay, and are our weapons, our money? Because having an F off fund removed so many inauthentic relationships? Oh, yeah. It's so hot, right? Like, how many people are jobs that they so called hate, but like, you know,

they've got a mortgage, or people are in relationships. And they're like, well, I don't really like my partner, but they pay for everything. And I'm like, Okay, so this would be a reason you leave your partner and be you go make some money.

Hailey Thomas 36:58

I'm like, you know, how, yeah, let's to know how to make money. Like, that's the thing that I have learned from you is that one of the things is that making money creating money is a skill. Like it's a thing that you can learn. It's not like a magical thing that happens to you or doesn't happen to you and you have to be like a special chosen one. I'm doing like a wand motion here. But like, it's not magic. It isn't in one way, but like, it's a skill. That's a thing that anyone learned,

Serena Hicks 37:29

don't I now I'm gonna go on my soapbox. I'm like I'm gonna real but what I want to do is talk about the patriarchy built it this way. They wanted all people all people of color and so called poor white people to think that only special chosen few ba ba so all the rest of us should be so grateful for to settle for crumbs. It's like settling for crumbs is what keeps us hungry. settling for crumbs is what keeps people I hate the word sheeple. But you know, like, Where are we? Yeah, because anybody wants to feed themselves or their babies, their kids, like, you know, it's it's easy to get stuck in the like, I don't have options because I need this next paycheck because I need XYZ. And I speak to that, personally. Yeah, that was my situation for like, 8000 years, we live paycheck to paycheck. There's not a lot of options. And, you know, the universe was like, we've been calling for some time and she's been ignoring her. So we're just gonna make this hideous and let her boss kick her out. It actually really started for me, but I would have liked I would have stayed paycheck to paycheck, just

Hailey Thomas 38:24

Oh yeah. Yeah, absolutely. I have been in similar scenarios. Like, I would have stayed in my corporate gig. If I hadn't have, you know, had such a horrible experience my son's first year of life and like, fell asleep at a stoplight. Like that was the only reason of like, Oh, my God, here. I have to stop doing parenting or working full time in corporate I can't really stop the parenting. Yeah, so anyway, yeah, this whole beholden ness, I guess, to Yes, well, in places that, you know, kind of have power over you. I mean, one of my happiest moments was when I got to tell my husband like you can leave your job and not the data you have now. It's actually wonderful, and he loves it, but the one before if you can leave your job whenever you want. And now we're in a place of love being in our relationship where he wants something or like, needs to move away from someone or where he's using this person for this service. And something's not right or like, the guy's an actual asshole, and I'm like, give me a week. Let me go make

some money real fast.

Serena Hicks 39:21
It changes everything.

Hailey Thomas 39:22
It changes everything.

Serena Hicks 39:23
Everything and back to what I talked about authentically connected relationships, I'm like, there's something just so powerful about like, we can throw money at things when we need to, we can buy time and buy time. I literally mean I'm like, you know, it's bizarre to me, like, just sort of the idea so many people are like, I can't buy a housekeeper. I can't do this. I can't do that. I'm like, but when you're exhausted, you don't show up and do your best work. And then of course, you can't raise your rates or you don't have a full client roster, where it's like spend some money on someone who wants to be housekeeper and number one, you are supporting their business number two, therefore you are supporting their family and their growth and their prosperity. In the meantime, you just removed four hours of shit you hate doing it. And that can be nap time or cuddle time or creative time or anything that's nourishing of your time. Exactly.

Hailey Thomas 40:09
Yeah.

Serena Hicks 40:10
Yeah.

Hailey Thomas 40:10
That's so good. Okay, so we took kind of aside. Welcome to my brain. Welcome to all of our conversations forever. But okay, so anti racism school happen, not happen, you created it, you went through anti racism school, what changed about the way you thought about who you were as a coach, after that experience,

Serena Hicks 40:29
I think I just brought everything up for me. And I think the best takeaways for me were that like abundance and anti racism are related in every way, including a humbleness, willingness to learn, but also learn and implement, learn, implement, not just consume books, every one of those white women in that group paid money to become inclusive. And every one of them on numerous occasions wanted to hide, or like, I just want to read another book and like, nope, if you're doing it, right, you're gonna make mistakes at some point. And it's the same in business. If you're doing it right, at some point, you're going to have a moment of like, Oh, shit, I don't like that choice. And it's like, yes, now make an apology, fix whatever needs fixing, and move forward. Because if you're trying to do it perfect, you're trying to

play safe and playing safe, it's not nearly the same as playing to win. So I learned that in getting to coach and teach. And then that definitely shifted stuff for me, I realized I'd sort of been doing that in my business, where it's like, it's sort of delegated responsibility for true rapid growth to like, you know, whenever it's meant to be, as opposed to, you know, when my business is going to boom, when I decide it's going to boom, and I get 100% behind it, not whenever it's quote, meant to be. So for that reason, it was end of summer, actually signed up for Simone six months to fully booked mastermind. But like, make no mistake, it's not the mastermind that got me fully booked. It's the version of me that decided I was going to be fully booked the end. And then like, Oh, well, let me pay for this mastermind, because it will give me excellent tools, resources, and I make jokes all the time. Like I require supervision. It's not true, but it's not not true. So for me, yeah, coming up with that money investing in that it literally didn't even start four months. But it changed. It was very intentional investment for myself. And it changed me as in like, all this is I'm not kidding, I'm not exploring, I'm not going to like, you know, have a 50, 60 or 75k year like, I'm going to go all in, and I'm gonna go big because my thriving changes the world and my work changes others. And again, I got so much to set of working with you, Hailey, and then seeing how you work with your clients that it was like, Oh, the ripple out effect here is so powerful. And that is when I was like, I only want to do business business coaching. I love all coaching. There's no like, Oh, no, no. For me, it was like this is the zone of this was like the niche if we're using that term that like allows me to empower others, to empower others to empower others to change the world.

Hailey Thomas 42:46

Yes. And I love this thought this this reality, you just said like 16 wonderful things there. But one, you get to pick when when rapid growth happens

Serena Hicks 42:56

me it doesn't happen to me it happens. Well, hey, I'm all in. I'm ready. What does it take? let me figure it out.

Hailey Thomas 43:02

Right? Like it happens when you decide that you're willing to make enough decisions and like speed because basically growth doesn't rapidness doesn't come from like having to skip over steps. The rapidness comes from like creating a Gosh, I don't know how I want to explain this. But like it comes from the cycle of like do evaluate to evaluate but just much faster.

Serena Hicks 43:23

Doing is the part that most people want to skip. They want to plan, evaluate and me to just so we're clear, no judgment. This is always always what I want to do. Right? But it's not what gets us there.

Which I just noticed. I'm like, Okay, so we're running out of time, because I talk real fast. And that's okay.

Hailey Thomas 43:38

Like we can record a part two of this, this.

Serena Hicks 43:41

Yeah, well, it can we end on the one thought because someone mentioned that I was like, I want to speak to this. What do you want to debt invest in coaching and this is tied to deciding to grow our business. So just so we're clear, with my old history of having a bankruptcy on my credit, and all of my credit was maxed out, which wildly unimpressive number like all in added up to exactly 50k like, all in that is not impressive. And to some people is but to me, I'm like, No, most people have like a \$300,000 house mortgage that for somehow it doesn't register as debt. I'm like, how's that debt anyways? The answer when someone's like, I want to invest in coaching, but I have debt, my belief borrowed, if it serves you, but it has certainly served me to make a bunch of money is you flying solo as a knee flying solo got me there. So if I want to really change that, it might be time to get in a new angle. See, my blind spots be challenged in ways that clearly I'm not really comfortable doing on my own? Yes, it's just a point of view. It is my point of view. It reminds me my friend who hired a personal trainer, he's like, of course I know what to do, except I never do it. So I hired my trainer because they pushed me past my comfort zone. And I don't like it but I do like the results. Mm hmm. And for me, that was and is and has been key to my rapid growth is man I have doubled down and invested to the point that my partner has been wildly uncomfortable, which is too bad because we have separate money, but like, this is how this is my house, this is how I had the 110k. December is like, invest, invest, invest. So in August, it was 10k. To get into someone's mastermind, it costs more now, but the short version is I literally didn't have that available on credit. So I remember I had money from antiracism. Like I had the money, I just didn't have access. And I was like, Hey, I self coached. But it was literally I'm like, Matt, can you put this on your credit card, you'll get points. to that. I just wanna point out, you're gonna get 10,000 in points. And if you say no, it's totally fine. Our relationship does not depend on you loaning me your credit, this is very needed. But also, if you want points, that's great. And he was like, Well, what would you have done? If I'd said no, what I was like, I was gonna call my mom. Yeah. She said, No, I'm gonna call my grandmother. And I think sometimes people, I think some people would have like, felt like the words begging or shame come up. And I want to point out that for me, it was an opportunity to step into my CEO energy because my business felt like a toddler baby, as in I will feed this, I will feed this Yes, no matter what, if you want to judge me, that's no problem. This kids getting fed. And for me at that time, I knew that what I wanted next step was that exact coaching. And so when that meant asking, Matt said, Yes, and literally was paid back in 72

hours, just so we're clear, but he still has the points, good job, brah, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But all of this ultimately started with my decision, I'm investing in my business, I'm going to get whatever it takes for me my choices to feed my business baby so that I can grow and be challenged and be held and supported. Yeah,

Hailey Thomas 46:31

there's a lot of agency there. And it's just as much as you are deciding, like, deciding and going all in and again, not testing, but deciding.

Serena Hicks 46:41

Correct.

Hailey Thomas 46:41

Nope. I'm actually just gonna have rapid growth now. Like, it's just time, I'm just gonna do it. Now. You also are deciding on how you're creating that. So like you created that solution. And the solution could have been any solution for anyone in the circles that I run in, right? There's a lot of talk about, like ethical marketing, and you shouldn't have to take out debt to be a part of a mastermind. And if you suggest that that's an option for anyone, then, yeah, I kind of have that reaction to have like,

Serena Hicks 47:06

I'm on the opposite side of that. I'm like, I have that debt, because I didn't know how to make enough money to not have that debt. So now I'm going to find me some debt, because that is all business is. Learn how to make 10x. Yeah, whatever my debt is,

Hailey Thomas 47:20

well, and that that keeps the agency out of that person's hands, right. Like he keeps the thing

Serena Hicks 47:25

The stay in the struggle.

Hailey Thomas 47:26

Yeah, you just have to keep doing what you're doing. And then hopefully, you get different. Free.

Serena Hicks 47:31

Yeah.

Hailey Thomas 47:33

Yeah, we're not like, yes, that is, everyone should have loads of it like to actually completely neutral. The thought is, it's a tool.

Serena Hicks 47:41

It's a tool for transformation. I also want to point to debt and the

idea of shame is inherently patriarchy. I'm like, Listen, I'm speaking very generally. And y'all should know that my partner is a white man. I'm not mad at white men, just so we're clear. But I'm like, in the universe of the men who built America like white men borrowing from other white men know all sorts of debt, no shame. Like, that's how that what. But at this point on the planet, it's like women, people of color, you should be ashamed of your debt, get out of it immediately. I'm like, I can have debt and not be ashamed, in fact, as a personal revolution,

yes.

Hailey Thomas 48:14

I love that. And I love that there's, it just removes so much heaviness. And again, what we're talking about is stuff that's going to come out in your business and in how you are like moving around in the world. But ultimately, it starts as how you're thinking about yourself and the thoughts you have about your own humanity. What's Yeah, what you have access to and what's for you, right, it's a work a conversation of worthiness. So I think now's a good time to wrap up this episode, but from our conversation,

Serena Hicks 48:40

Lets talk every Monday for the next six months, let's sort this out until everybody's a millionaire, as Rachael Rogers says, and I love everybody should be millionaires. I'm like, Yeah, let's do that.

Hailey Thomas 48:48

Exactly. So we're gonna wrap this episode up, and I promise I mean, again, to kind of take us from like, tell us about that, that 110k December and take us through what her thoughts are for next year. But for now, yeah, stay tuned. We'll see you guys on the next episode.

Serena Hicks 49:04

Thanks, Hailey. Thanks, guys.

Hailey Thomas 49:09

Thank you for listening to this episode of one year from now. You can find the show notes and all the links we mentioned at brainspaceoptimized.com/podcast and if you want to chat me up about all things entrepreneurship, then head to brainspaceoptimized.com and join my email list. This is where we have rich conversations about the experience of business ownership is thoughtful, it's funny, I like getting responses and chatting with you all. It's a good time. Lastly, you can find me on Instagram at brainspaceoptimized and we will see you in the next episode.

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