

## Own Your Worth: How To Charge What You Deserve Instead Of Settling For What You Get



<http://wordcarnivals.com>

# How To Convince Cheap, Broke, Price-Shopping Customers To Pay What You're Worth

by Carol Lynn Rivera



This article is part of my monthly Word Carnival and I won't even ask if you know what I'm talking about. I *know* it's something that just about every small service business, solopreneur and freelancer deals with at some point.

It could be when you're just starting out and doing what you can to build a business. It could be during a down economy when your customers zip up their wallets. Or it could be something that permeates every business deal you make.

The fact that people will try to cut you down on price isn't your fault. Everyone wants "a deal" and services are somehow always perceived as negotiable.

The fact that they try to cut you down... *and win*... well, that *is* your fault.

Before you get mad at me for telling you the truth, you can put that blame on me, too. I've had plenty of experience wanting a job badly enough... not being confident enough about getting it... not wanting to deal with conflict and confrontation... wanting to "help" and feeling almost selfish for (gasp!) asking to get paid.

The good news is that I've also had plenty of experience dealing with it and considering we've

made it almost 15 years in business, I've dealt with at least some of it the right way! It's not always easy. Sometimes you even have to concede failure and walk away from a job. But if you start smart, you can mitigate those times when it seems like the only thing someone is interested in is winning a price point. Don't cave! Try setting yourself up for success instead.

## **Know Your Own Worth**

If you don't understand the value of what you provide, can't articulate it or don't sound convincing when you do, you might as well be a cute little kitten walking into a cage with a bunch of hungry pit bulls.

Got that image in your head?

Good.

The only way around it is staking a claim on what you're worth before you show up at any prospecting meeting or enter any business negotiation.

If you waver from your conviction that you're damn good at what you do, know what you're talking about and will do your prospect's job like a genius, they'll smell blood. And attack your pricing.

You're not running a business because you're lazy and dumb.

Wear your expertise proudly. Show it in everything from your shoes to your haircut. Yes, how you present yourself matters.

I once met with a prospect who showed up looking like a disheveled mess in sweats with a mop of flyaway hair. The only thing missing was the fuzzy slippers. And you can bet your booties I made a judgement call about that person.

Exude high-worth in everything you do from your appearance to the way you sit at a table and the words that come out of your mouth.

If you don't believe it, nobody else will.

## **Lead With Value**

Price means nothing without context.

What if I told you your website was going to cost \$5,000? Would you spit your coffee out onto your desk? Or would you raise a skeptical eyebrow and wonder why so cheap?

If you wanted a simple Wordpress site, you'd probably lose some coffee. But if you expect a

10,000 page eCommerce site you'd think I was scamming you.

The fact is, people want to know how much something is going to cost. It's a reasonable question. But when it's the first question - and the one that they'll base their decisions on - it's the wrong question.

So don't answer it.

I always start with some version of "it depends" and then turn the conversation immediately to business needs.

Find out what your client wants and needs. Talk about how you'll deliver it. Make it clear what results you provide and what you can bring to the table that puts you in the unique position of being able to do the job and do it well.

Even if your price ends up being more than your prospect can afford, you want them to walk away pining for all that juicy goodness you just offered - not cruising with a shrug for the next cheapest competitor.

## **Obliterate Words Like "Expensive" From Your Vocabulary**

This is an unnecessary bit of self-sabotage. I used to be so guilty of sitting down with a prospect and apologizing ahead of time for the pricing I was about to give them.

Not because I was overpricing but because my brain had convinced me that since the last person had told me the price was too high, the next person would, too.

"I know it's expensive, but..." I would begin, and then try to backtrack through value to why it was worth it.

Bzzzzzzzt!

Wrong.

I had become my own competition.

Tuck this little tidbit under your hat the next time you're in a price discussion with someone: just because they can't afford your price doesn't mean it's too expensive.

Start at worth and value, never at price. And put any issues about unaffordability squarely on your prospect. Trust me - it's them, not you.

## Never Negotiate Below Your Value

The first thing you need to do is know what your pricing threshold is so that when someone says, "Can you knock ten bucks off?" You're prepared with an answer and you don't have to look wishy-washy while you consider the 497 reasons why you may or may not want the job/want to lower your price/should or shouldn't lower your price.

Maybe you're ok with knocking ten bucks off. But know what that threshold is. Even better, don't knock anything off.

There are other ways to negotiate on cost that don't include cutting into your profits or devaluing yourself.

It could mean taking something in trade. The key is to trade like-for-like value.

It could mean setting up a payment plan. A big price tag may seem daunting but splitting it into small chunks over time makes it more attractive for your client - and a guaranteed income source for you during that time period.

It could mean offering an incentive. Reward timely responses, up-front payments or shorter timeframes with a discount.

Or it could be as simple and straightforward as reducing services to match someone's budget. The next time someone tells you they can't afford your prices, try asking them what they *can* afford and then removing services until you hit the right price point.

## Ask About Budget

Most people will say, "I don't know" but if you're lucky you'll get some input that you can craft your services around.

I haven't had a lot of luck with this approach because it's rare someone will have the remotest idea what they should/can/want to spend (until you give them your price, and they know it's definitely not **that**).

But here's a trick that can sometimes ferret out a person's spitting-out-their-coffee point: Test a few price ranges out on them.

Ask them how they would feel if you told them your services turned out to be \$100. How about \$1,000? \$10,000?

You can pick your increments but keep them simple (don't ask about every dollar) and keep them relatively far apart. The idea is to find the point where your customer's eyes start to bug out

so you can back down and find a more comfortable place.

Lots of times you can get a halfway decent idea of the range you should be working with. But only *after* you've nailed value!

## **Turn Your Prospect Into A Co-Conspirator**

You may ultimately be doing the work but don't talk about what you'll do – talk about what "you" will do – together.

If you have a brilliant idea for helping your customer, phrase it in "we" language.

*Oh hey, you know what we could do to make that thing really work? We could totally do this...*

If you can get emotional buy-in you're more likely to get financial buy-in. So get your prospects invested in what you're proposing. Give them co-ownership.

Before long they'll start thinking your brilliant ideas are their own. Pat your ego on the head and let them. If they pay you to execute those brilliant ideas - and you do it brilliantly - who cares?

## **Don't Get Frustrated**

Its not personal. It's business.

That's one of the toughest lessons I had to learn. Heck, I still have to relearn it from time to time because when you own a business, it's a bit like your baby and any sleight or attack on it can feel very personal, indeed.

But when someone tries to knock you down on price, it's not about you.

When they tell you how crazy your pricing is and that they can get what they want cheaper somewhere else, it's still not about you.

It's about their financial situation, their priorities, their perceptions.

Sometimes you can't influence those things at all and that's when you know it's time to walk away. Be as objective about it as you can. You're still awesome, even if that total idiot can't see it.

## **Decide What Your Help Threshold Is**

Every year we opt to do a certain amount of pro bono work. Once we hit that threshold, we're done. Take you're I'm-broke-but-a-really-great-guy sob story elsewhere.

It's a good idea to plan ahead of time for the eventuality that you may find a cause to support or a guy you can cry into your beer with whose project you just *have* to take.

Sometimes we do work for schools or for our community. Once I met a dead-broke woman who had a great business idea and a ton of passion and I would have paid *her* to do that project just because it was fun and I wanted to.

But we do run a business so if we run around feeling generous and bleeding-heart all day long, that could make for some bad financials. So we plan out our digressions ahead of time. We may not know *what* we'll be doing but we've got some time and budget slated for it.

Pick and choose where you want to donate your efforts and you'll be less inclined to feel pressured to lower pricing or give services away.

It's a tough road from "Here's my price" to "Here's what I'm totally worth". It's fraught with jabs at your self-esteem, thick-headed prospects and plenty of failure. Sometimes we're our own worst enemies.

But if you're tired of pricing negotiations that leave you exhausted, defeated and even angry, it's time to rethink how you approach them. Before you put yourself through the wringer again, or compromise under pressure, try reminding yourself of these few tips and practice, practice, practice.



Carol Lynn is the Editor-in-Chief and author of Web.Search.Social, a blog dedicated to educating small businesses about... you guessed it... web, search and social marketing. She is also the owner and project manager at Rahvalor Interactive, a creative marketing company based in Holmdel, New Jersey. With both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in education, she started her career teaching kids the ABCs and worked her way into teaching adults the ABCs... of marketing. When she's not obsessively rearranging nouns and verbs, she spends her days lining up Action Items and keeping the rest of the Rahvalor team on track. On any given day she will be responsible for building websites, writing for blogs, managing clients' social media accounts, making sandwiches, meeting with prospects, providing TLC for clients and dealing with one of the cats that will inevitably crawl up on someone's keyboard to nap.

# Generation-Y (Millennials) Have a Branding Problem: Value

By [Nick Armstrong](#)

Yesterday, I discovered my first gray hair. After consulting with my family and my doctor, I made the decision to retire as CEO.

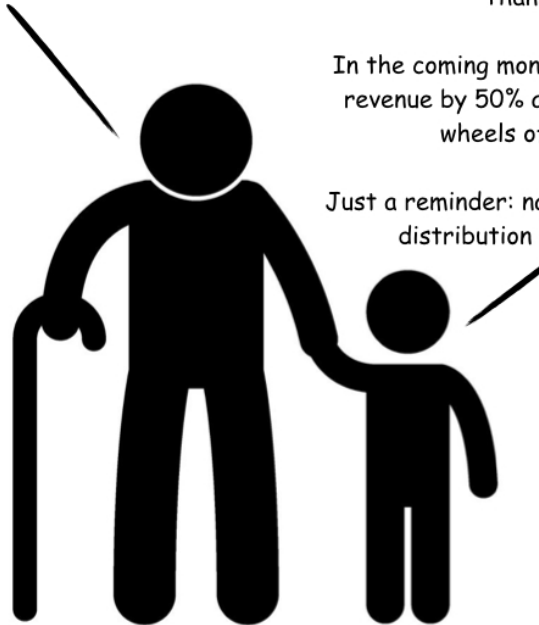
I'd like to introduce my successor: Billy. He's 6.

He has 5 years of experience with social media and has more followers on YouTube than most Fortune 100's.

Thanks Bob.

In the coming months, I hope to boost revenue by 50% and get the training wheels off my bike.

Just a reminder: nap time and juice box distribution begins at 2pm.



## "Grey Hair Club"

A public service announcement by WTFMarketing.com

**Except, there isn't really one.**

A Generation-Y problem, that is. Not the way you're thinking, at least. There *is* a Young Person Problem, though. One I've been thinking about for a long time. I got so worked up about it, [I wrote a whole damn book](#).

The basic premise: with the advent of personal public platforms through countless mediums (Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, etc, etc) you can use de-facto fame however you'd like. The idea of the world hearing your innermost thoughts two decades ago was reserved for

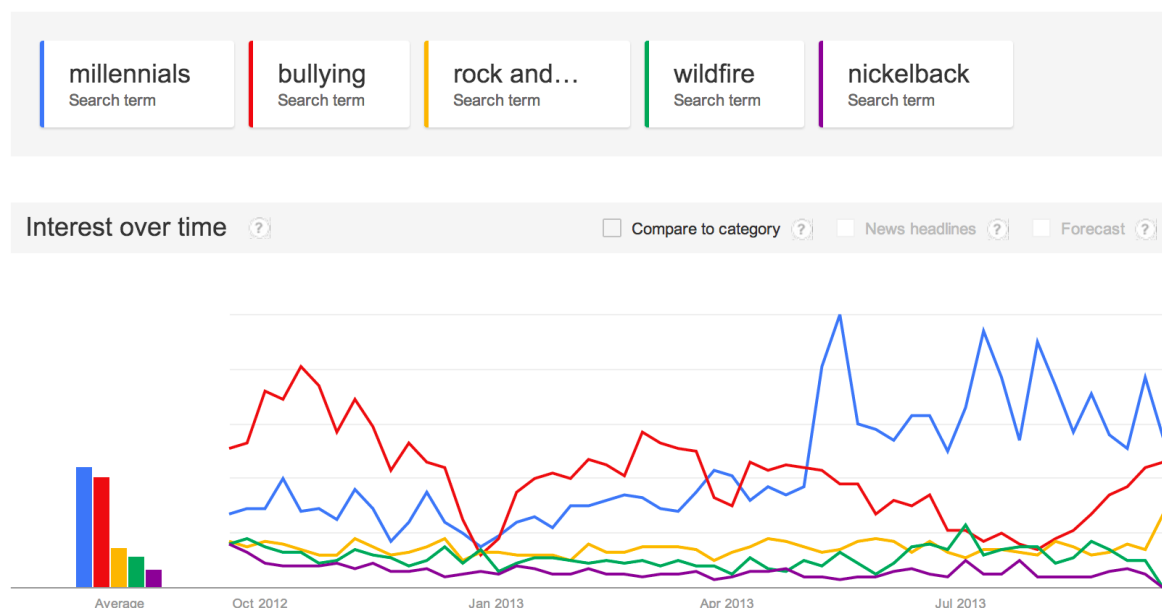


actors, athletes, and politicians. Now, anyone and everyone has access to a platform and your mileage may vary depending entirely on your savvy.

You can post about things that either boost your value or diminish it. Basic Social Internet Literacy and Public Relations are not something most of us were taught in school alongside arithmetic and penmanship. Is it any wonder why so many people get so screwed up when technology gets involved? Yet we pounce on stereotypes and slip ups and angsty bitches. And we keep on [vaguebooking](#) and posting nip-slips and rants about our bosses.

Ergo, Young People have a branding problem not *just because* we're young and have a generational name we gave ourselves. Young People have a branding problem because most of us don't yet have the life experience to know that a reputation is something that sticks with you. That comes with time and experience. On top of that, just like everybody else – we weren't *taught* Basic Social Internet Literacy – which is why screwing up online isn't a generational thing.

Look, I get it. [Writing blog posts that cause Gen-Y to ragequit](#) in the comments section gets most sites insane traffic.



**Turns out, more searches than bullying, rock-and-roll, wildfires, and, oh yeah – Nickelback.**

Sorry Chad Kroeger.

Hating on “those damn kids” turns out to be a pretty good revenue generator. It’s not a new thing; remember grunge? Gen-X was so tired of being trodden on they invented a whole damn *genre* of music! In fact, hate in general seems to drive a lot of business – [anger spreads faster through social media than any other emotion](#).

One commenter on the Huffpost article:

“I really appreciate this article. I am a part of the generation you speak of and find myself having these thoughts a lot. It’s really helpful to scale yourself back a bit, lol.”

*Really?*

You know what they call someone who brings someone down to make themselves feel better? A bully. Understandable that you don’t know that, considering bullying is taking a back seat to millennial bashing in the news these days. I hate the fact that someone my age read that article and went, “Oh, gee – maybe I shouldn’t aim as high as I wanted...”

Who the fuck wants to live in that kind of society?

**Let’s talk Tesla...**

[Tesla died penniless and alone, in love with a pigeon](#). Tesla’s father begged him to come home, thought he was working himself to death. Made fun of his letter of commendation from the dean of the Austrian Polytechnic. His father died that same year. Tesla had a mental breakdown, his Uncles put together enough money for him to return to his studies, then he went on to work for

Edison and become an inventor.

What if he'd thought, "You know, Dad's right, this life sure doesn't live up to my expectations, I'd better go follow in his footsteps and become a priest..."?

Here's what would have happened:

- no A/C power (the thing that lets your house have nice things like ovens and lightbulbs)
- no fluorescent lightbulbs
- no medical x-rays
- no radio
- no remote control (kind of moot without A/C power...)
- no electric motor
- no wireless communications (no WiFi...)

**There's only one way to break this cycle of nonsense: know your value.**

How do you do that? Three steps:

1. What do you want to be known for?
2. Live, breathe, eat, sleep, and ceaselessly pursue #1.
3. Learn how to talk about #1 to someone in a non-promotional way so they understand why you do #2.

The people who are the best in the world at something can command more respect, more money, more sympathy, more love, more patience, more... whatever. Because they're the best in the world. There isn't a substitute down the street.

*You* can be that person. Maybe you aim a little closer to home: the best in your community. The

best in your state. The best in your country. Or just “the best”.

Knowing your value is the thing that stops you from making stupid silly mistakes online (for the most part). It’s the thing that lets people be sympathetic when you realize you screwed up and patient while you fix it.

Knowing your value is the thing that lets Gen-Y (and all young people to follow) brush off idiotic, stereotyping articles from bullies. It’s the thing that lets you land or create the job that you want. It’s the thing that lets you negotiate hard for your wage.

Be the best. Know your value. Everything else is nonsense.

### **About Nick Armstrong**



*Nick Armstrong is unapologetically awesome at explaining difficult-to-grasp marketing and web technology concepts. In his day-to-day work, he helps small business owners swear less and profit more by making small business marketing fun.*

*For the last 3.5 years, Nick’s business [WTF Marketing](#) has amassed a large number of happy clients, among them Fortune 100s, solopreneurs, and everything in between, including four distinct \$2M+/year businesses in Fort Collins, Colorado alone. He leverages over a decade of web design experience and eight years of hands-on, knee-deep community building and marketing.*

*He founded the Digital Gunslingers in 2009, teaching \$5 classes on social media and marketing concepts and donating all the proceeds to charities in Fort Collins, Colorado. You can connect with him on [Google+](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).*

# How to Get the Writing Pay You Deserve

*by Sharon Hurley Hall*

Your writing is worth something to the people you write for. Take that as read. Yet a lot of writers don't get the pay they deserve for the value they bring. I'm not just talking about new writers, but about experienced writers too. And I'm including myself – I could have earned a lot more in my writing career if I'd [raised my rates](#) earlier to reflect the value I offer to clients.



## How to Talk Yourself out of Money

I'm not casting blame here. Lots of new writers have a conversation in their heads that goes from "Will anyone actually pay me for writing?" to "Holy crap, someone has put money on the table; I'd better take it!" Usually, they don't bother at first to examine whether the lump sum they are getting is adequate recompense for their time and effort or their experience. That means

many writers spend far too long working for [far too little](#). They just don't get the writing pay they deserve.

## A Mantra for Better Pay

What clients want to pay  
for your writing services  
reflects their budget  
NOT your value  
- Sharon Hurley Hall



Don't get me wrong. There is definitely a trade-off, especially when you are brand spanking new to the writing biz and have nothing to show to prove your worth. Or, as happened to me, not so new but without any clips due to a career break. But owning your value as a writer is a mind game – and it's one you have to keep playing throughout your writing career. Here's the mantra to live by: **never believe that you are only worth what some people are prepared to pay you.**

## The Value of Experience

The way to make this come to life and start to own your worth is to change the way you think about what you do. Yes, you may be a service provider, but you are also an expert writer – that's why your clients hire you. And the right pay for your writing services should not be for the hour you spend on the final draft, but for all the experience you bring to creating the right content to help your clients meet their aims.

I've said before that you don't pay your doctor for the five minutes you spend in the consulting room. You pay for the ten years s/he spent learning the profession to provide you with the right diagnosis and treatment. It's the same with you. All the experience you have in your niche or field of expertise doesn't come cheap – or at least it shouldn't.

## What's Your Value?

Once you start thinking differently, you can begin to break down the value of your services for clients. Off the top of my head, I've got seven areas which help me offer a better service to my clients.

1. I'm good at figuring out what clients want even when they can't fully articulate it. (See [Why My Clients Think I'm Psychic](#)).

The right writing pay  
reflects your experience  
in creating excellence  
for your client  
- Sharon Hurley Hall



2. I've been writing for a long time.
3. I can handle various iterations of English (US, UK, Canadian and Australian) (See [How to Write with a British Accent](#))
4. I can even work with and improve copy translated from French or Spanish thanks to past fluency in those languages.
5. My [writing experience](#) includes time as a reporter, sub-editor, editor, proofreader, blogger and teacher, enabling me to handle everything from news stories to conversational style pieces to academic papers.
6. I don't miss deadlines.
7. I'm a polymath who loves learning and researching and knows about a lot of stuff.

I bet you could come up with a similar list for yourself.

It's difficult to put a dollar amount on some of those items, but they have value as part of the overall package. And it's my belief that clients hire me – and you – as much for the intangibles as for the result, because **those intangibles are what make you great – and what help to determine your value.**

## Trading Up

Once you think differently about what you do and can articulate your value, the next step is to trade up, so you gradually **move from settling for what you can get to being in the driving seat.** For me, this meant quoting the rate I wanted to new clients and [renegotiating](#) with old ones. Eventually a few clients with fixed budgets stopped working with me, but we parted company amicably.

## Showcasing Your Value

Why Writers Need to Market:

Promoting yourself  
and your writing  
highlights your value  
to potential clients  
- Sharon Hurley Hall



It's also important to have a narrative that shows that value. For example, with my blogging clients I talk about my skills in idea generating, writing and research, my ability to work with WordPress and find images for posts, and my social networks with whom I'm prepared to share selectively. Add to that a couple examples of my most shared and commented posts and it makes a difference.

## The Importance of Marketing

There's one more thing you can do, too – market like a fiend, whether you have plenty of work or none at all. Because I'll tell you – it eventually pays off. One single article that attracts comments and shares can bring in plenty of new work – that's been my experience. Writing for one client led to a gig with another – and that gig has brought new clients my way because my work is out there and being seen. So **promoting yourself also highlights your value to potential clients.**

## Working Out What to Charge

What should you charge? That will be different for everyone and will change over time. A couple of years ago I wrote [Advice on Charging for Writing Blog Posts](#), which is a good place to start.

But think about these questions:

- How much do you want or need to make an hour?
- How many hours will it take you to do a particular job?
- How much extra time do you spend on unanticipated wrinkles?
- What's the going rate in the market?
- What's the value of your existing experience and knowledge?

The answers to all of these will help you work out what to charge.

## Last Words

Finally, remember what I said earlier. Asking for – and getting – what you deserve is all in the mind. You have to know without a shadow of a doubt that you bring value and you have to be prepared to walk away from those who don't recognize it. Are you ready for that?



Self-confessed word nerd and polymath [Sharon Hurley Hall](#) has the perfect job - as a professional writer and blogger. Sharon has also worked as a journalist, a college professor (teaching journalism, of course), an editor and a ghostwriter in a career spanning 25 years. She's often spotted hanging around on Twitter, LinkedIn, [Google+](#) and Facebook. Sharon enjoys helping other writers achieve success through her writer mentoring blog, [Get Paid to Write Online](#), which has been running for about eight years.





# Stepping Up With My Big Girl Panties On

*by: Michelle Church*



There are times when reality slaps us in the face and we **MUST** deal with what is in front of us.

We have to **let go** and **have faith** in ourselves **BEFORE** we can expect anyone else to.

At times, we are so confident that others can smell it, but then we lose it when its most important - specifically asking for the \$.

Knowing our worth, charging accordingly can be difficult, but necessary!

- Why do many of us (entrepreneurs) struggle with charging our worth?
- When you search anything about charging for your worth, you will see tons of advice, a common problem, right?

We courageously begin our business with vigor, determination and confidence because we believe that we have something special to offer and we can get paid for it. We recognize there is

a **real need** for our awesomeness. *Can I get an amen?*

Yet, some of us fall short...struggle...and at times wonder what the hell am I doing wrong? I am working my ass off, my clients love me, but I need more money! DUH...something's wrong with the pricing structure girly!

As I mentioned before, others have seen more abilities in me than I saw and [I felt like a fraud](#). The truth is, **I am that bomb ass chick** and I should charge what I am worth!

So now it is time for me to step up and put my beautiful lace panties on and **do the damn thing**.

My intention is to share steps and thoughts I am in the process of taking, my journey to value based pricing, and hopefully inspire another to at least think about it.

This post is part of the monthly [Word Carnival series of posts](#). This time we discuss the challenge of knowing your value and conveying it to clients so that you can charge what you're worth - and get it! Make sure to check out the other posts by some of the smartest, kind, and value based entrepreneurs you'll meet [right here](#).

## Recognize Our Talents

We all have talents, and we **are** unique. One of the most difficult things to do is an understanding of *what* makes us unique.

How many times have you heard that you have to specifically identify your talent that your market needs and connect with them accordingly? My word chef friend, [Tea Silvestre](#) was very instrumental for me in that arena. *I will always love her for that!*

I spent many years working in the corporate world, yearning for a business of my own, yet living and learning **according to their rules**.

I did not know that I could use my talents in a separate business for other entrepreneurs; during many of those years, it wasn't popular to work from home. My family had a brick and mortar business and I KNEW I did not want that kind of headache.

Yes, I was successful, received excellent training and top pay that afforded me the lifestyle I was accustomed to.

But I was brainwashed into *their way* of handling business. My payment worth came from what

they told me I would receive based on their scale. There wasn't any room for negotiation, or at least I thought there wasn't.

I take full responsibility for allowing that, I had my big girl panties on everyday!

Quite honestly, I did not realize how much that impacted my life until I left, and NOW that I have had to evaluate my worth, that thinking played a major role to my detriment.

I come from the era where you do well in school, get your education, get hired by a major company, and retire after 30 years or so. Hopefully you have purchased a home, raised your family, and live in a house with a white picket fence - **NOT**.

Yes, I did much of that and I am very grateful for the opportunities that were provided. I was stupid - **I lost myself in the process**. I got comfortable and did not think or plan ahead very well.

I am a planner, sometimes to the nth power...but I went with the flow and as many of us do in our younger years, did not think about getting older or what tomorrow may have in store.

Years later, I own a full-time business and struggling. Not for lack of work, or laziness, but more as a result of not knowing my truth, my worth, and fighting for it. Not anymore, *I ain't afraid of no ghost!*

## Recognize Our Value

Not trying to sound like everyone one else, but I get that providing value is key to expecting pay for what we are worth..our value can be found in our differences..*What do you think?*

What I am saying is, when our services that we provide are quality, valuable, at or above the clients expectations, we **should** expect to receive quality, valuable pay.

The issue I have had, which I did not think existed, is fear that maybe they won't hire me if I tell them I charge this much. I recognize that my confidence was not up to par, I did not appreciate [my truth](#), my value.

Realizing that fear existed took time.

## Recognize Our Time is Money

Has anyone sucked up your time asking for advice and quite possibly they are really looking to

get answers that they may have had to pay for otherwise?

I try very hard not to do that to other entrepreneurs. Sure, I love getting valuable advice for free, but I respect that we all want to be paid for our time.

I actually don't mind in many cases, as I consider it as part of being of service and paying it forward, especially for clients and those that I know will reciprocate.

There is a reason many consultants tell you up front what their rate is. If you want a free consultation, the time is limited or there are just so many slots available, act quickly. Time is critical. I feel that if I am not spending time earning, I am spending time improving, learning and creating for **my** business.

Don't give away your gold. Somebody out there WILL pay for it.

It goes back to value, your hard-earned time developing and expanding your skills are worth something. All that time you spent on your talent is valuable to someone else.

That sounds good huh, **I have not been doing that.**

I have to say, helping others with their business ideas, website traffic, social media, blogging etc., is a great booster for my confidence and it feels great. It has taught me that I do have experience that is valuable and others need what I have to offer.

It's up to me to ensure that I don't give away the store.

This slower period of business has provided time to think, time to reflect, time to appreciate my gifts. When we are caught up in meeting deadlines and don't take the time to exhale, we don't see what's going on.

## **Be Faithful. Be Confident. Be Intentional**

*All of this boils down to a few things that I have learned during research and steps I am taking:*

- **Target the right market.** If you want people that can afford you, make sure you are focusing on the right market..well the right people in the right market. I know it's not easy, and I struggle with that myself. It takes time and possibly a mentor or coach would be very helpful.
- **Set the right expectations.** Build into the original agreement up front a payment

increase timeline or some form of agreement that if I charge you less now at some point the rate will be this. Communicate and negotiate. Your value will show up when they receive your kick ass service.

- **Base the pricing on the outcome.** Be specific as to what the client can expect. Determine upfront how to measure success. This is my new focus. By creating this, I have now removed any confusion and I can deliver more than what is expected (most of the time)...still a work in progress.
- **Dress the part.** Make sure that your website, your social media profiles, email signatures (your online presence) reflects your rates. If they are mediocre, guess what. Update them periodically. As I was googling myself recently, I saw a profile I need to update which is why I included this on this post. Going forward, I will set up a schedule on my calendar to go through all of these profiles and update them at least quarterly. I actually believe each revision is better than the previous version. The Gemini in me keeps changing my site...I gotta stop that and just build my brand and stick to it..*note to self!*

If there was one focus area that you would advise us to utilize when creating a realistic pricing structure, what would it be, and why?

If you have ever struggled with being confident in your pricing structure, what one thing improved your confidence?



### **Michelle Church**

As a marketing support specialist Michelle Church helps solopreneurs manage, market, and maintain their online presence efficiently through social networking, blogs, websites and much more. She is passionate about being an advocate for others by accomplishing the much needed tasks required to accomplish their goals. Michelle is tenacious, honest, loves challenges and being of service...

# Get Intimate With Money {and Get Paid What You Want}

by Ashley Welton



How do I set my prices? What do I charge? Is it too much, too little, just right?

The number one question of all service based business owners centers around the moolah, and how much of it to command.

If you scour the interwebs for others who offer similar services, you'll find everything from hourly to flat rate, slave wages to a king's ransom.

It can be overwhelming to wade through and make any sense of the numbers.

Here's what I know, and it may feel a little far fetched for some of you, but hang in there 'kay?

Money is a product of the human imagination. We *invented* it, but most of us forget this colossally important fact because we weren't around for its inception.

Way back when, before the birth of the common currency, it would go something like this:

*Oh hey Nima, I see you have an amulet of salt. I value that amulet of salt at three seashells.*

Then Nima would either say, *Yes I too value my salt at three sea shells, let's trade*, or *Semca, you are not my ideal caveman, I value my salt at five seashells, no less.*

**Money is simply a representation of value, and everyone values things differently.**

Trickery and tomfoolery I tell you (or opportunity, yes that)

While Sarah will scoff at your \$300 per hour price, Simone will say, what a deal!

More importantly than *them*, however, is you.

**The valuation starts with YOU. You have to know (bones deep) the *value* of what you're offering is worth what you're charging**, be it 35 or 500 clams on the half hour.

You *can* charge premium pricing, but first you **MUST** believe it.

You've got to be wrapped in a cashmere blanket, settled down in front of a crackling fire, and sipping your favorite drink kind of cozy with your rates, or no-one's going to pay them. Period.

Who's got the kindling?

Did you know talent and expertise don't play as large a part as you'd expect?

I've seen brutally talented people charging the industry minimum (why, I ask, why!??!) and less than brilliant blokes (and ladies) charging premiums.

You know why? Because that's what they *believe* they can charge.

The key to premium pricing lies in how you think about it. And your thoughts directly affect your representation of your services *and* your prices.



So, how *do* you settle into your pricing and get paid what you're worth (one zillion seashells to the lady on the left)?

**If you need a jumping off point** (understandable, I totally did when I started) *BRIEFLY* check out others in your industry. See what they're charging for similar services. Notice the range, because you are going to find a range (incredible isn't it?)

*Now that you've got the range, **scrap it.***

Don't base your net-worth on someone else's self-worth. <<tweet

The point of that reconnaissance mission is simply to show you that there IS a range, and you decide where you want to be. No one else. Just you.

**Do not compare or compete on price.** <<tweet

What do *you* want to make a year, a session, an hour?

**What do you *want*?** Write it down, bedazzle the hell out of it, and own it. <<tweet

Many times, when I'm pricing out something new, I simply ask myself what number feels right, then get quiet.

A number *always* pops up.

Then I'll nudge it around a little. What if I increase it here, how's that feel? No, yes. How bout this? I play that game until a number clicks. **It usually feels equal parts right and scary.**

The click is the price I can **own and feel good about charging.**

I want to throw a little caution to you on starting too low. Low pricing attracts a certain kind of clientele, and it's mighty hard to get them to come up on price when you're ready to increase your rates. Then you're back out in the marketing forest, naked with a spear, looking for that other kind of client that happily (yes it's possible) pays your rate.

**There's no need to double your efforts, so, start with pricing that attracts the kind of client you want to serve. <<tweet**

Some of you may have started sort of low (nothing wrong with that), and you're wondering how to raise your rates.

Make an announcement; on this date my rates will be increasing, if you'd like to receive x-service at my current rate, jump on it before said date. Then do it.

And psst, you can increase your rates every couple months, or every new client. It's *your* business, you decide.

For your existing or recurring clients, have a conversation with them, and maybe throw in a small bonus for their loyalty to you. (Just don't give away your first born okay?)

Also be prepared, you might have some clients say no, that's too much. It's okay; you're opening yourself up to someone who wants to pay you because the value you provide is worth it to them. But again, you've got to believe it.

I can't stress enough how much of this pricing stuff hinges on your mindset.

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Let's take a little journey.

Picture yourself at the center of a grand and colorful bazaar. You have beautiful and coveted

goods to sell - pearls that illuminate the lives of those who take them home.

Many pass by, but some stop. They run their hands over your treasures, eyes wide and mouths agape, enthralled at discovering such riches. They look to you and ask, *How much?*

You answer, smiling calmly, *The price is this.*

*Okay, they fire back, I'll take it.*

As they leave and you watch the river of the bazaar engulf them, the last thing you see is their smiling face, shining eyes, and deep gratitude.

Turning back satisfied, you see a line has formed.

*Who's next? How can I help you?*

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You have a spot in the grand bazaar, and it's yours to do with whatever you wish.

Remember that.

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A Lil' Money Magnet Recap:

Rule One: Don't base your net-worth on someone else's self-worth.

Rule Two: Don't start too low. Set prices that will attract the clients you want to work with.

Rule Three: Believe bones deep that the value you provide is worth the price you ask.

Rule Four: Commit to increasing your rates.

Rule Five: Remember, yours is a special breed of awesome. **Own it.**



Ashley Welton is the chief Creative Copywriter and Brand Anthropologist at Miniskirt Ninja. She hails from Hawaii and delights in working with businesses to uncover and translate their brand through action inducing copy that inspires, converts, and ignites a sense of adventure in all who come across it.

*Tweet her at [@miniskirtninja](https://twitter.com/miniskirtninja) or give her a wink on [Facebook](#).*

# Pimp Your Pricing Or Be Prepared To Eat Crumbs

by Melanie Kissell



“Owning your worth” and “Earning your worth” are close cousins.

But if you don’t first “own” your worth as a small business owner and entrepreneur, gear up to settle for the [teensy weensy] crumbs that will be thrown your way.

**A diet of crumbs isn’t very filling ... or fulfilling.**

They’re not even appetizing and they won’t pay the bills, either.

Selling yourself short, as the saying goes, leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

**Discounting your true worth is detrimental to your well being and the well being of your business.**

Getting at the heart of understanding and embracing the value you provide to your target market and, hence, the fees you charge isn’t always easy. However, it’s crucial to your success.

Trust me. I know.

True confessions ...

**I’m the guiltiest party of all.**

I tend to give away the farm – free business building advice, free tips, free resources, free online marketing consultations, free webinars, free interviews. free social media strategies, free website critiques, free guest posts, free marketing plans, free reports ... you name it.

**Hell, I may as well throw in a free lunch!**

([Ameena Gorton](#) would pop out of her skin if she read this. Let's hope she doesn't. Could be messy.)

Not owning my worth is getting pretty expensive.

Can you relate? Ringing any bells for you??

### **The thing is ...**

You might assume people love you when you hand them everything free of charge on a silver platter. Fact is, they may be smiling and sending flowery thank-you notes your way BUT ...

They actually don't respect you.

And the dial on your *self-respect* meter drops a little lower every time you don't charge what you're worth ... and especially when you charge nothing at all.

### **Here's what I can tell you ...**

The days of giving away the farm are coming to a screeching halt for me. I've been doing myself and the world a big disservice by not owning my worth.

It's perfectly okay to toot your own horn, learn to become an expert at [bragging – the right way](#), and charge what your years of experience, skills, strengths, and talents are worth!

You can either start owning your worth or settle for crumbs. Personally, I've had my fill of crumbs.

#### [Image credit](#)



Melanie Kissell

With every fiber of my being, I believe the most valuable asset in life is a sense of humor. And no day is complete without coffee.

By night, I work my magic as a Certified Perinatal Educator and Lactation Specialist. I've been witnessing the miracle of birth and working in the business of babies for the past three decades. Teaching is my 'thang'.

By day, I smooth out the wrinkles of online biz start-ups for moms entrenched in creative small biz chaos and the tricky juggling act of motherhood over at [Solomompreneur](#).

# The Consultant and the coach

by Sandy McDonald

Once there was a consultant . . . and so the long story goes.

The short version is this. A consultant (aka me) had all the same experience and knowledge as the coach (aka me).

The coach was valued and paid appropriately, the consultant wasn't. The difference was a lens, a book and the yellow brick road.

## The lens

The consultant's clients asked her for a bicycle and expected a Mercedes. She quoted for a Mini hoping to bridge the gap, but it was a lottery.

She created a three tier offer with every task detailed and costed, hoping to ameliorate 'the creep' before it happened. But between her and the client, they sabotaged the process.

She wanted the best outcome for them. So did they, but not at the price tag. Too often, she compromised and delivered the better option anyway.

As a result, the consultant filtered her work through a lens that said, *'Everything I am doing for you will become a contest between how much I give and how little you are willing to pay.'*

This was unlikely to make for a happy working life.

*If you reserve your best effort for the never-pleased client and the bully of a customer, then you've bought into a system that rewards the very people who are driving you nuts. It's no wonder you have clients like that--they get your best work.* Seth Godin

## **An aside: cost, value and the client relationship**

The financial relationship between consultant and client is complex, particularly in the creative services industry.

Service providers aren't selling sacks of spuds. There isn't a simple benchmark. Potatoes cost \$x per pound. Branding consultancy, copywriting, designing, creative marketing etc costs, what? \$ ... insert the '*industry standard*' hourly rate. Add your considered value, experience, expertise. Costed how? By the number of years you've done it? Number of jobs? Quality of testimonials and awards? Street address?

The questions then become, 'so how many hours is '*insert task*' going to take?' Followed by, '*how long is that piece of string you're dangling and how much is still in your pocket?*'

In the interests of getting their worth and fostering good client relationships, most service providers do their best to match an offer with a price. Usually, it's contingent on trading time for money. And therein lies the rub. And the merry go round.

## **Back to the story: the book**

To save her sanity, the consultant decided she had to do something to make a change. She had long since ceased to love how she worked, but she believed passionately in what she had to offer. It appeared for a while to be a conundrum.

She took the decision to do [a course](#) that gave her permission to write a [book](#) and discovered several interesting facts.

First, she really had to believe in what she had to offer to warrant the time, energy and effort. It meant conquering [the Lizard](#).

Second, by going through a process of organising her body of knowledge and experience, she



uncovered a framework to the work she did. She could articulate it in a series of steps.

Third, by the time it was finished and published, she understood her worth. It changed her mindset. She would no longer tolerate a battle for appropriate reimbursement or work for the wrong people or leave money on the table.

Many years before, a client who had valued what she did, retired. He said to her, *'In all the years you worked for me, you never asked me once if I thought what you charged was okay. If you had, I'd have told you for what you delivered, you charged too little. If that's the case, how much money have you left on the table?'*

While the book alone was not the panacea for the change, it was the catalyst.

## **The purpose**

In writing the book, her purpose became clear. She decided to follow her yellow brick road and packaged up the framework into a coaching program. Then she went in search of people who wanted to blog brilliantly to create powerful clans and became a coach.

Now her lens was very different. The people with whom she coached wanted what she had to offer. They paid her a set amount in advance for a set period of time to deliver an outcomes-driven process. Filtered through this lens, her work became, *'how much more can I deliver you to successfully build an advocating community that'll grow your business and uplift the lives of others.'*

## **The lessons**

1. Know your ideal client very well. Don't abuse your worth working for people who don't value your time or expertise and, as Seth says, *'buy into a system that rewards the people who drive you nuts.'*

2. If your lens is cynical, distrustful, resentful, angry or otherwise unhappy, then you're doing the

wrong work for the wrong people for the wrong money.

3. Write a book. It's a challenge, but you'll never regret it, even if no one reads it. It's what it does for you.

4. This is a clarion call to all business owners. When you are super clear on [your purpose](#) for being in business, you'll simply not allow your worth to be abused.

5. If you don't want to coach, consider how else you can package your value in such a way that you can ask its worth for the tangible benefits you offer.

6. Don't wait to make a change. Every month leaves more of your considerable worth on the table.

And, if you want to blog brilliantly and build a powerful advocating clan, you know where to come. You can start with a 90 minute Online Audit. Just contact me [here](#).



#### **About Sandy McDonald**

Sandy McDonald works with business owners to build communities as a best-practice, business building strategy. She is the founder of WhyYouMustBlog.com and the founder of Australian charity, KasCare.

After 22 years running a marketing communications company, she used passionate blogging to build a community online, now numbering more than 12,000 from 54 countries to help the AIDS orphans of southern Africa.

She is author of the book, *Clans. Supercharge Your Business* and a featured author on Blogging for Business, in the book, *Its That Easy. Online Marketing 3.0*.

Sandy believes the blend of head, heart and the web is a collective power in the hands of business owners that grows equity in business while uplifting the lives of others.