

You're listening to the Abundant Practice Podcast. Where we work through the stuck places folks hit while building their private practices. Each week we dive into a practice building through different lenses. You'll get trainings, listen in on mini-consultations and conversations with other consultants. Each month there is a niche deep dive where we flush out a niche from a marketing perspective. Plus every now and then we throw in a "Where are they now" episode, and check in on the clinicians who were on before to see how the advice played out. When relevant, the show notes will include a worksheet for you to bring the content into your practice or life. Because I love you listening, but I want you to take action, too.

This podcast is sponsored by the Abundance Party, where for only \$39 a month you get courses on honing your niche and marketing your practice, scripts for the business side of things, monthly trainings, a chance for a one on one with me, and a much more intimate Facebook group. Where I currently respond to every post. You can check that out at Abundanceparty.com. Alright, onto the show.

This podcast is sponsored by growingtherapist.com. You guys heard Cris, the founder of Growing Therapist last month on the podcast in episode 59. She's a therapist with a business and design background who built a thriving practice using only her website as her primary marketing tool. She now really loves helping other therapists create successful practices by growing their online presence with confidence. You guys know how I preach the importance of an incredible website. And several of the Abundance Therapists I know have hired her for their sites, and I'm telling you they are gorgeous. Folks also tell me that working with Cris is painless, is fun, it's hassle-free. Her expertise doesn't just stop after your website's built, she is there for you after your website's launched, create online marketing strategies, and make sure your website is actually working for your business. Check out Cris' website, growingtherapists.com to see examples of her work with fellow therapists. And there you can also download the free top 10 website mistakes checklist so you can make sure you're not making any of them. Alright. On to the show.

Welcome to the Abundant Practice podcast. I'm your host, Allison Puryear, from AbundanceParty.com and AbundancePracticeBuilding.com. And today we have one of my closest friends, Jane Carter, who you can check out at JaneCarterCoaching. Jane is somebody who keeps me sane. She's someone who we mastermind all the time. And I just love you so I'm really glad you're here.

Jane: Ah, the feeling is mutual.

Allison: And we're talking about something near and dear to our hearts. And something that we've both helped each other with off and on throughout the years. So, let's dive into it, Jane. Tell them what we're talking about.

Jane: Today we're going to talk about perfectionism. And, I know. I'm sure none of you ever struggle with that.

Allison: No one. Ever. No one in my audience has that on their radar at all.

Jane: Yeah. I had kind of a meta-moment where I was like, I got to get this right! I want to give them all this information and then I was like, hey Jane, this is about perfectionism. And letting go of that. So I'm right there with y'all.

And this is a really important mindset issue. A lot of the work I do in coaching with people is not just the steps and strategies, but we're really digging into the mindset stuff. Because there's just nothing like starting your own business to make your stuff come up. And a lot of therapists struggle with perfectionism. And it just keeps you stuck. So, I kind of wanted to start with just why this even matters. Of course, it keeps us stuck. I really want y'all to enjoy the process of creating your private practice. I

don't want it to be this kind of torturous slog. And it needs to be fun. Because if it's not enjoyable, then we won't get it done. And so, it's really important that this be an imperfect process and you embrace that.

Allison: Right. When I think, too, if it's gonna suck, why not just have less risk and work for an agency?

Jane: Right! Exactly!

Allison: Why create another agency just for yourself?

Jane: Exactly! But it's amazing how many people just end up doing that. And just, because we, especially as therapists we tend to have this built in thing of if its fun, it doesn't count. It's got to be hard. And it's got to be a suffer fest or somehow we're not helping people. And I really want to argue that the opposite is true. That the more you enjoy it, and embrace the imperfection, the more you're actually going to get done and the more you're going to serve your people.

Allison: Yes.

Jane: And I really want your process of growing your practice to be driven by purpose and not by fear. And if it's driven by that sense of purpose and I can't wait to serve my people, it's going to be a lot more enjoyable than when it's like, oh man, you can't screw this up.

Allison: No pressure!

Jane: No pressure. And it's hard, because it's an extremely vulnerable thing. So of course, our fear is going to come up. But this whole thing, and I'm going to zoom out a little bit, but something I talk to a lot of my coachees about is this idea that working through all this stuff that kind of the emotional and mindset stuff that comes up in our business, is something that is going to grow us and impact who we are. So it's not just about creating a business, but it's about who you become in the process of growing a business.

Allison: Yeah. Can we talk about that for a second?

Jane: Yeah, absolutely.

Allison: I just feel really, it's been a really cool thing as a business owner and as someone who's watched all these other business owners. The confidence that we gain by doing this hard thing and doing it well, and we all don't do it well at first. Sometimes it is a struggle. But it usually is a struggle on the front end. But getting through that, for me at least, personally, has I think, matured me in ways I don't know if I would have matured before? And that's just personal. I don't know if that's...I don't know if I can say that everyone will mature more. But, I will say, there's this confidence, and this sense of powerfulness that I just love having that I wouldn't have had otherwise. And that I love seeing grow in other people as their businesses grow. It's amazing.

Jane: Absolutely. And I can totally relate to that. First of all, I can totally see that in you because I've known you for a few years now. And I feel like you and I both use less self-deprecating language than we used to use? You know? And I feel a lot more confident than I used to. And having overcome some failure. Having kind of learned how to love myself in the process of putting out some pretty big imperfections, and yeah, it's so, yes I can totally relate to that personally. And I have a feeling a lot of your podcast listeners can relate to that. Or at least we can put out that hope that, you know what, if you can keep going even in the midst of failure, even in the midst of having to face your own

weaknesses and your own fears. And even the judgment of others, you're going to grow as a person. So yeah. One of my friends was like, you're like Pete Jane right now. I was like ooh, thanks!

Allison: That's awesome!

Jane: I know! It kind of blew me away. Awesome. I mean, I've really been grown by this process. So, I don't say that to just blast how, y'all, I'm awesome.

Allison: But you are awesome!

Jane: But, I mean, I do feel awesome. So, I want everyone else to feel awesome. So. So let's dive into the perfectionism. Like I said, the number one thing, kind of this belief we've got to get it perfect before we do it, whether that's writing a blog post or whether that's actually launching your practice, whether that's doing a talk or marketing yourself in some way. Perfectionism keeps us stuck. John Acuff did this huge study of people who finished their goals versus who didn't finish their goals. And he found an inverse relationship between perfectionism and finishing goals. So, basically, the more perfectionistic people were, the more likely they were to not accomplish anything at all. But, the more people scaled back their goals, and kind of made them messy and fun and perfect, the more likely they were to actually accomplish them.

Allison: That's awesome. Yeah.

Jane: I know! It's like you have to have fun doing this, you've got to be messy. You're going to hear me saying that about 20,000 times. I was reading a book recently, about Leonardo Devinci. And it was so interesting. We know him as probably the best painter of all time. He had a bunch of unfinished pieces. And he would just sort of throw them away. I mean, there are a few unfinished ones floating around out there, but he was such a perfectionist that if he couldn't do it perfectly he would just implode and just wouldn't finish it. And it just broke my heart. I just thought, oh my goodness, think about the worth of all of these half done masterpieces. And did he on his deathbed say, man, I'm sure glad I didn't finish the Adoration of the Magi. You know? Man, no one saw that screw up. You know? So, to relate that to therapists, you have people to serve. And you have a masterpiece to create. And you're not going to create that masterpiece unless you kind of start out with the finger-painting and the messiness. And the thing about perfectionism the more I've been delving into learning about it, the more I've learned that it's just a fancy word for fear or shame.

Allison: Yeah.

Jane: I want to read something. I read a lot of books by creative people. Because building a business is really a creative process. And Elizabeth Gilbert wrote a book called Big Magic.

Allison: Oh, I love that book!

Jane: Isn't that great? She wrote it for creatives. She said, alright, perfectionism is just a high end, [unknown 10:04.0] version of fear. I think perfectionism is just fear and fancy shoes and a mink coat pretending to be elegant when actually it's just terrified. Because underneath that shiny veneer, perfectionism is nothing more than a deep existential angst that says again and again, I'm not good enough and I never will be good enough.

And Brene Brown says, whenever perfectionism is driving the car, shame is riding shotgun. So yeah, this stuff is vulnerable. All of our kind of what if I'm not good enough? What if I fail? All that stuff is gonna come up.

Allison: Perfectionism is the socially acceptable way of putting things off. Or, hitting pause, like you were saying, instead of just doing.

Jane: I love John Acuff and he's a writer, and he's written a lot about perfectionism. He calls it a noble obstacle. And so, as therapists, again, we tend to be addicted to this noble sense of suffering. But John Acuff says, perfectionism tells you, if it's fun, it doesn't count. He said perfectionism is just fear in a Halloween costume. That's the quote I was looking for. So, it's very real. I've been in the midst of it. I've been expanding my coaching practice to non-therapists as well as therapists, as you know, Allison. And, you've been really helpful in kind of catching me when I'm like well, first I've got to get this training perfect before I can launch this thing. First I've got to do this before I can launch. And months later, you're like Jane. It's time to go. It's time to do it. So I'm in the middle of all this myself.

Back to this idea that shame is riding shotgun. Again, we all have these shame voices that come up. We've all experienced being laughed at on the playground. Or trying to do something creative and facing some failure. And there's just nothing like putting yourself out there and being seen. To make those voices come up. And a lot of us know about the brains. Some of us don't. But, we have this limbic system, we have our animal brain. And our animal brain is like just stay safe. Find lunch, don't be lunch. And the thing about our safety brain is that it kicks in when we are starting something new and when we're being vulnerable. And our limbic system doesn't really know the difference between say the critique of a blog post versus a saber tooth tiger. Our brain is not very discerning. So, even just being aware of, okay, this is my old shame voice. Or oh this is my brain kicking in. this is my [unknown 12:49.9] telling me that I'm about to be eaten by a tiger. You can kind of go, oh that's my brain. I've got to write the blog post. It's okay.

Perfectionism, another problem with it is it kills creativity. And like I said earlier, building a business is a creative process. So, you have to be willing to risk failure to be creative. And if we're sitting there afraid we're going to beat the crap out of ourselves at the first sign of imperfection or messing up, we're not going to get started or we're just going to get stuck.

Allison: Or, I know people who have a ton of blog posts written, but they haven't published them. Like the publishing is the part that feels, like you have all this awesome stuff to share with the world, and there are people out there who want and need to hear it. But you're feeling stuck.

Jane: I always think about a kitten whose about to pounce. And it's kind of wiggling its butt. Looking. But, we just kind of sit there, we just wiggle our butts and we don't pounce.

Allison: I like it. I like the image.

Jane: Yeah. And sometimes, you just need to pounce. You just got to be messy. And the thing is, all that wiggling your butt, like you're a little kitten, takes a lot of energy. And you need that energy. You need that energy to serve your people. You need that energy to create the stuff that's going to have you be seen so the people can find you. We just don't have the time or energy for all this perfectionism. It's such an energy suck. We don't have time to wiggle our butts.

So I want to talk about a few ways to kind of reframe perfectionism, how to attack it, how to shift it. So, you ready for this jilly?

Alright, so the short answer is you need self-compassion and you need to bring some fun into it? But I'll go into more detail about that. You've got to start by accepting that shame and fear are going to come up. There is no way around it. Your limbic system is going to kick in. you're going to be messy. You're going to get some criticism. There's no way around it. So instead of trying to get rid of the shame and fear voices, because if you do that, they'll just double down. You need to shift into curiosity about them.

Or you could even thank them for trying to protect you from being eaten by that saber tooth tiger. You're like, thank you so much. I appreciate what you're trying to do. I appreciate that you are trying to not let me create that time on the playground where I got made fun of. Or whatever that painful thing is. Thank you so much, however, I need to do this thing. So if you could sort of chill out and sort of let me take the risk. When you can be kind, even to your critical voice, then it just kind of unblocks things. But commit to self-compassion and positive self-talk. You've got to be the first one to say, man, you gave it a shot. You went for it. I'm so proud of you. Way to put something out there. No matter how people react to it.

Allison: Makes sense.

Jane: Okay? Because like I said, failure will happen. The thing is, and you and I have talked about this before and even did a podcast episode about this. But we are just all awkward middle-[audio broke 16:12.1] out on the dance floor for the first time. And you know, we have to go through that time with finishing our braces and the terrible perms. And our terrible dance moves. We have to go through that period to become the suave, beautiful amazing Casanovas that we all are now, right? But you know, if you can look back on that young, awkward middle-school self, going to her first middle-school dance and be like that is so sweet, I love that person. Instead of man, I was such a raging dork. Think of yourself now, going through all of these little awkward steps and stages and making your marketing efforts and trying to reach your people. Some day you are going to look back on this time with kind of a wistful joy. Or I hope you will. So try to enjoy it. Try to loosen up and do your dance moves. Because the sooner you at least try to dance, the sooner you're going to get the better dance moves. So say oops a lot. Okay? Like write it on your wall. Just write the word oops. Or get a post it note and stick it to your computer. Just say oops. Doesn't go well, I'm just going to say oops. Take a playful approach.

So another John Acuff quote that's really short and sweet, that I love, is fun goals win. So, whenever you're doing something, just ask yourself, well how could this be fun? Sometimes we forget to ask ourselves that question. But as soon as you ask that question, your brain starts working on it. And working on a way to make it more fun.

A couple of ways to make it more fun, one is just think of it as an experiment. You know what, I'm going to experiment with a newsletter. Let's just see how this goes. Or I'm going to experiment with taking this local colleague out to coffee, to network with them. Let's just, I'm going to be curious. Let's just see how well or how badly it goes. Another way you could do this and make it more fun is to take a game-ful approach. And what I mean by that, Jane McGonigal, she did a TED talk, she wrote a great book called [SuperBetter](#) and she designs video games. And she talked about how to take a game-ful approach to your goals. Where you could see it as like living in a video game. So you can come up with your secret identity and you could figure out who the villains are and you can figure out who your allies are. And each little step gets a point. And you have big epic wins and then you have just little, I picture Super Mario Brothers. Or Pac Man. Each little point adds up. This way, if you fail at something, instead of being oh God, my life is over. You can just kind of hear this little whoop, whoop, whoop. Whoop voice. And just kind of start over. Alright, recommitting. Starting over.

And I have a little gift for your people that has to do with this, that I'll share at the end of the podcast. But try to make it more fun and enjoyable. And again, just take that game-ful approach. I'm almost, kind of fearing your listeners being like, but I've got to feed my kids. I can't make this into a game. This is serious business. But again, the thing is, if you don't make it fun, it's going to be hard to do it. And you really can't afford not to make this more enjoyable.

Allison: And....

Jane: Because that's when we don't feed our kids. Is when we get stuck in the perfectionism we don't do anything.

Allison: I wonder, too, how much of this perfectionism comes up when people have chosen marketing strategies that aren't actually a good fit for them. You know? They think it will be more effective because it's considered a more effective thing. But, if fun goals win and you're not doing the social media marketing strategy you said you were going to do, then you're actually not marketing. And to making sure you're putting something in its place that will actually be fun or interesting.

Jane: Yeah. Absolutely. That's such a great point. It's got to be authentic. And our authentic selves are messy. This is going to sound like a backhanded compliment, but it's totally not. You are really good at putting your imperfection out there.

Allison: No. it's been a grow fetch for me. So, I do take it as a compliment because I know it's hard for me.

Jane: I can say it so condescendingly, you're great at showing your imperfections. You are the master. But what I mean, I love that you put out a video recently where you were dying your hair. And wearing a white robe. And people were like whoa. But your imperfection is what makes you authentic. So, authenticity is what makes us stand out in our marketing. And it also makes it more fun. So do marketing that is authentic to you. Don't try to be someone you're not. If the thought of going to a networking event and giving out business cards makes you want to just like go fetal in your bed, that's not your marketing method. It's got to be authentic.

So another way to think about it, I love this. I was listening to Debbie Millman. She does a design podcast. And again, I try to tap into more kind of creatives for some wisdom with this stuff. And she said that it's more important to focus on courage than confidence.

Allison: Oh, I love that. Yes! I feel I need that plastered everywhere.

Jane: I know! It blew me away! I kept listening to the same 15 seconds of the podcast where she was talking about this. I've got to be confident, first. But the thing is, confidence comes later. She said confidence comes with repetition. It's that first baby step that's terrifying. It's that first step on the dancefloor in middle-school. It's that first attempt that takes a lot of courage. And if you can focus on just being brave despite your fear. And taking that first step. That first messy step. I like to use the first pancake analogy. Make that first kind of gooey, spongy pancake. Then, it's the repetition of whatever it is that brings you confidence later.

Allison: Yeah. I always think of that quote from that guy who founded LinkedIn. That I'm going to butcher. But it's something to the effect of, if you're not embarrassed by your first product or your first website, then you launched too late.

Jane: Oh that's great. I love that! I'm going to get that quote from you. Well and its, Anne Lamott wrote Bird by Bird which is another just fantastic book for creatives. It's about writing. And she has a whole chapter called Shitty First Drafts. I love that. She's like no, you just got to get something on paper. She's like intentionally write a shitty first draft. And what's cool is that when we kind of go alright, I'm going to write a shitty first draft. I'm going to just put something out there. I'm just going to throw up on the paper. And just make something pretty out of it. When we do that, then our brain kind of kicks in and goes, oh, we're actually going to do this? Oh cool. Okay. And it tends to get on board. And then it tends not actually be that shitty. So, just put out your shitty first draft. And I say that with air quotes. That can be the actual draft of something written. But a shitty first draft can be a networking meeting with a referral source. A shitty first draft can be going on a podcast and stumbling through. You know,

whatever comes to mind. It can be any sort of marketing thing that you do can be sort of your shitty first draft. But your drafts are going to get better and better, the more you do it.

Another way to conceptualize the shitty first draft is to cut the task in half, or give yourself double the time to do whatever the task is.

Allison: I like that.

Jane: How are we doing on time?

Allison: We probably need to wrap it up in the next couple minutes.

Jane: So one last thing. Another way to think about this. So you and I were having breakfast with Paul Fugelsay the other day. Our wonderful, calm, kind of stoic friend who just has this really, you can't read his face. But he'll just blurt out these really wise things every once in a while. And I was talking about my own perfectionism that was coming up and keeping me from getting things done. And he was like, well Jane, the thing is, you're going to die.

Allison: and you and I were both like oh, say some more Paul.

Jane: And in his very quiet voice he just said you're going to die someday. You don't have time for this shit. You don't have time to worry about making it perfect. Just do this. Just live. Just put something out there and enjoy it. Because you're going to die someday. And I went, oh, yeah, you're absolutely right. And I actually got a lot done that day. So, folks, when you need to feel better about getting things done, just remember, you're going to die.

Allison: it was actually such a poignant moment. Because he's understated. I think. Where I was like, Jane, you're going to die someday. Just live a little. Would have come across so differently.

Jane: Exactly! And he is so authentic, that it made perfect sense for him to say something like that. In that moment. So again, he's a great example of authenticity. And you're a great example of authenticity. So, the more you embrace your imperfectionism, the more you embrace your authenticity, the more loveable it makes you, too. The very thing we're running from, what if I'm not loveable enough, we lose when we put perfectionism first. When we serve our fears.

Your business wants you to succeed. Your business is for you. it doesn't want to torture you. It doesn't want to humiliate you. It wants to give you money and fun and creativity and the satisfaction of serving people really well. You don't want to be a half-done Deviance masterpiece. Because you aren't perfect. You want to be an imperfectionist and put something out there and enjoy serving your people.

Allison: On that note, that's a beautiful place to end.

Jane: Thanks! Yeah. So on that note, I want to give your people a fun way to bring some more playfulness into this. As I was mentioning, that game-ful approach can really make a difference. So I made a game. It's called Private Practice Crush. I used to be addicted to Candy Crush. So I had it on the brain. And it's just a fun little game that lists a bunch of different things that you do in your private practice. Especially for marketing. And you get little points for every single one that you do. And you get to name what your epic wins are. And you get to name what your secret superhero name is. So, it's kind of fun. And because I'm at an imperfect stage where I don't have this awesome landing page, and da da da da da. If they just want to email me at jane@janecartercoaching.com. And maybe put, I'm an imperfectionist in the subject lines then I will send a copy of Private Practice Crush.

Allison: Can I just point out, how much I love that. Like you were just saying, you don't have a landing page created for it, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I love that you're embodying this and you're not letting it keep something that's going to be really fun and really help people. You're not waiting. You're putting it out there. And you're creative with how they can get it. Because there are people who are listening that are going to want that, and it would be really sad if they didn't get to have it because you didn't share it because you didn't have the perfect landing page created, so yay!

Jane: Well thank you. That means a lot. And as you know, me and technology don't agree.

Allison: Right, yes. This is the truth.

Jane: So yeah. I want to be in a good mood when I get those emails, too. Instead of pulling out my hair and screaming at the computer trying to make a landing page. But thank you, that means a lot. And you really have been someone who's helped me to be more authentic in this whole process.

Allison: Well, everybody, check out Jane at www.janecartercoaching.com. She's also doing our Abundance Party training on May 31st at 1:00 EST. So if you're in the party, we'll see you there. If you're not yet in the party, you can check it out at www.abundanceparty.com. See if it's a great fit for you. And join us for that awesome training on how to better be an imperfectionist. How to imperfectly be an imperfectionist. Awesome, thank you so much, Jane!

Jane: Oh, thank you so much. I really appreciate the chance to be on here. Yay!

Alright! Bye!

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