

113 Getting a Running Start

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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.

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Welcome back to the Abundant Practice podcast. I'm your host, Allison Puryear. I am here with Amie Esher and yeah, Amie, tell me, how can I help?

Amie: I had so many questions in mind, that's how it goes, right? A million questions, but what I, I think what I need the most help with is I work right now in a, a group practice with just one other person. I don't have my own practice, yet. So, I'm working under somebody. And I'm moving in a couple months to San Diego. I live in Sacramento now. So, I'm very excited. Its going to be an amazing move. But I'm also very nervous because I don't know anybody there. I'm going to start a private practice immediately, that's my goal anyway. And, I'm trying to figure out the quickest and easiest way to build up my practice when I move there, basically. So, I guess that's the biggest thing for me right now, just trying to figure out how to make all that work.

Allison: Well, luckily, I've done this twice. I've moved to a new place and started full time private practice. so, what's worked for me is the networking piece. So, I know when I landed in Seattle, we got there, we drove cross country and got there on Wednesday, June 8th. I don't know why I remember this. This was like 2011. But I still remember. But, from Monday on, I had a networking lunch or coffee setup every single day for weeks. Not on weekends, because I was hoping to see my husband. But I just networked my tail off. I already had built my website, so I'd also recommend going ahead and getting that ready to go.

Amie: Okay.

Allison: And that way it's like one less thing you have to do.

Amie: Yeah, perfect. I'll do that for sure.

Allison: Yeah. I'd basically have your website basically ready to go. And that doesn't mean it's necessarily live yet. It can't hurt to make it live, because then it could helpfully start to rack up some SEO if that's one of your strategies. You could start blogging or vlogging on it if you plan to do one of those things.

Amie: Yes, the vlogging piece. I'm still trying to get used to the camera. And all of that. But I think, I'm starting a live Facebook for the first time this week. A Facebook live. See, I don't even know. I'm switching it all up.

Allison: It works. I knew what you meant.

Amie: I know. and I'm just like, I don't know why I've struggled to get my actual face out there, because I teach, too. Not only am I a counselor, but I'm a teacher. And so, I do this all the time. It shouldn't be that hard. Yeah, that's definitely a big piece of it. I think is videos.

Allison: Yeah. and so, you can go ahead and start doing those. And, with Facebook live, for instance. You can do a Facebook live. And then you can add captions to it. Which I always recommend adding captions. Sometimes acts funky and it won't let you. Sometimes it works fine. So, if you do it and it works and you try to do it again and it doesn't work, it's not you. Its Facebook. So poor Megan runs into that all the time with captioning mine. But then you can download the video and pop that on your website. The captions don't come with it when you download it. But there may be a way to download it and basically have a transcript on your website.

Amie: oh, okay. That's a good idea.

Allison: And you can also pop it on YouTube. You can just repurpose that content all over the place.

Amie: Perfect.

Allison: You know, YouTube is owned by Google, I believe. And so, they are friends, so if you are hosting it on YouTube, and it put on your website, it will help. And if you've got a transcript, most SEO is based off of words. And so, if you've got the transcript for it as a part of it for the people who prefer to read/SEO, then you're kind of covered in multiple ways.

Amie: Oh, I like that. okay, so for a while, I was trying to figure out blogging or vlogging. Which one should I go for? And you know, I just know video is so popular these days. It just seems more likely people are going to want to watch things than read them.

Allison: Yeah.

Amie: so, that's a good way, like you said, of just bringing it all together. So, you don't have to have it separate. So, I think a lot of it is, when I move, so right now I see a lot of clients. And my supervisor, one of my supervisors, was my interning supervisor before I was licensed. And now, I'm still with her, years later. She's a wonderful person, but she works me to the bone. And she's like, we can fit in another client there. And I'm like, no, that's my break. No, we can fit in someone there. And so, I've really learned good boundaries through all of this, for sure.

Allison: Good.

Amie: It's been [inaudible 06:13] And how not to run a private practice. so that's always helpful, too. And, at the same time, I'm noticing that, I'm having my own fears around charging more, also. Because I know, for example, we haven't raised our client fees since the beginning. So, no one, and it's been years and years since they've had a different fee. And she's too afraid to, because she doesn't want to lose them. And so, she doesn't even want to bring up the subject of money, right? And I'm more comfortable in it than she is, because I'm pushing it. I'm like, we're really, you know, we're not charging very much. We need to up that. and then, I see there are some fears of that in me. Starting my own private practice. because it's like, that's going to be my only source of income. So, I got to find a way to make that work, for sure.

Allison: absolutely.

Amie: Yeah. and I guess one of my questions is around how to, I guess, comfortably charge an amount you've never charged before. So, I really want 10-14 or 15 clients, max. and right now, I'm seeing about 25 to 30 some weeks.

Allison: Woo.

Amie: Yeah. I know. it's just too much. I'm an empathize. I'm a highly sensitive person. So, it's like I can't do it. So, yeah. I know I need to charge more. So, I can be there more fully for my clients. And of course, take good care of myself, too.

Allison: Yeah. have you figured out what that rate needs to be?

Amie: I think I came to, looking at like \$175 a session. And in California, you know, I figured that's not really asking for very much. But I know I already get pushback and I charge, for some patience \$100 a session. And so, that's a big leap from that. and still people with \$100 a session, usually cut out therapy at some point, because its too expensive for them. Or, they cut back, or something like that. so that's something I've noticed from where I live right now and where I work. So, I'm not really sure, exactly. I'm thinking if I could do \$175 and I only had 8-10 clients, that would be ideal for me. So.

Allison: So, it's interesting, because this like, the clients that need to leave therapy because \$100 is stretching. Like it's just too much for them is a different client than the one that's going to pay \$175. Right? Like, they are in a different socio-economic bracket, essentially. They might have the same exact fears, the same exact concerns, the same problems, but if \$100 is a

stretch, then those people aren't going to land with you at \$175. Which is okay. Because the people that can pay \$175 may be able to pay that comfortably. So, they can be more consistent with it. And, that's one reason I'm real big on, in that initial phone call, telling people your price. And saying, if it's true for your practice, like it is for mine, saying, I work with people weekly to start with. And I want to make sure that's something you can commit to both in terms of your time and in terms of your money.

Amie: Right.

Allison: that way it's not like somebody's trying to make it work and they are trying to go to every other week. or they need to stop for a while. I'm happy to give those people referrals of people I would trust with my friends and family. You know? And that feels really good and free to be able to make sure they are getting great care. And they are not stretching themselves beyond their limits. So, \$175 is a different economic group. And there may be some people who were stretching to make that work but stretching to make \$175 work is often a different, you're just making a lot more money. As a client and as a clinician.

Amie: So, yeah. Very true.

Allison: I would trust it. Like, if that's what you need, based on the number of clients that make sense for you, for your health and your longevity in this field, then, by all means, charge it. And mark it well. That way the people that can afford you can find you.

Amie: Yes. That's true. So, I just wonder about that part, too. Because I'm not really sure. I know my niche group, for the most part. I got a sense that it's mainly women who are spiritually or holistically minded. And they take really good care of themselves. Women who shop at whole foods, for example, right? Or they are making sure they are going to yoga. Or meditating every day. Things of that nature. And I know there's a good mix of women like that. I actually have some in my practice now. It's funny who we attract sometimes, right? It's just how that all turns out. but, yeah, I have clients like that now, and it's amazing. When they came to me, I knew it was the right fit. They knew it was, even before I did. One of my clients came in and she said, I knew you were my person. I knew you were the person I was supposed to see. I don't know how to explain it. And then, as time has gone on, I've realized, oh my gosh, she's like a mirrored image of me.

Allison: aha. Yeah.

Amie: That's a little odd. Okay. Yeah. so, it's been fascinating. And I've learned about which clients I like working with. I don't like working with me of course. But you know, it's really helped me to see what I like doing. And at the same time, I'm not sure if the population necessarily has the means. But I guess I would have to do some more research around that and see. Because there are different levels of it, I would think.

Allison: Certainly.

Amie: Levels within that niche.

Allison: And let's think about, if they are going to Yoga and maybe they are going to acupuncture. And maybe they are seeing a naturopath. And they are going, whole foods are certainly not cheap. It might mean that they may have to cut back on one of their providers. It might be. But it's about prioritizing what their needs are right now. And they can return to their acupuncturist or whatever. But this person you're describing strikes me as somebody who's already spending the money, probably. It's just about allocating it differently. So, it's there. The money's there. It's about making it compelling enough that they recognize that you are what they need. They can see that clearly on your website.

Amie: Right. Right. That makes perfect sense. I can see that. so yeah, it really is all about priorities. I know how to talk to other clients about that before, and they've brought it up to me. Before I even said anything, sometimes. They'll say, I've never invested that much in myself. You know, okay. I think I will do this. But it is a stretch for me, emotionally, to do this. And I'm just like, wow, some people really verbalize that. they really, not everybody does. Some people say, oh, I just can't afford it. Or its too much for me. But, it's really about what are your priorities right now, is what it boils down to.

Allison: Yeah.

Amie: Thank you. That's super helpful. And then, I think I had some guilt around, okay, well, the fact that I only want to see a certain amount of clients. Right? Because I thought, well, you know, I definitely want to serve my community. And I want to make sure I'm doing as much as possible. I'm a 2 on the enneagram. So, you know. like we all are, I'm sure most of us are probably a 2 in some way. And, like, it's always like, am I doing enough? And there's enough talk, right? And, that type of thing. but the way that I see it is I need to do what's right for me. That'll do it. And the only one that's really pushed me, is me. So, I've learned the hard way.

Allison: Yeah. And I wonder if looking at it like if you're seeing your 8-10 people a week, and you're doing this clinical work. And you're taking great care of yourself, so that you can continue to do this clinical work, then it's a matter of, when you have extra energy, you could volunteer. Now, you'll have extra money, you can donate. Like, there are so many other ways to give, that's not through our work. Our work is about giving. And I think because we are helpers, we feel like we should help in all facets of our lives.

Amie: Right. Right.

Allison: I mean, I really want to help spread the word that there are other ways. And less draining ways. Because I see so many people wanting to give back through their work and then they burn out.

Amie: Yep. Exactly.

Allison: And it comes from a really beautiful and wonderful place. And, you could also go cuddle some stray puppies at the shelter. You know? like, there are other ways.

Amie: Exactly. Yeah. that's a little bit better. Yeah, absolutely. At least then, you're helping yourself and another person. Instead of burning yourself out to death. Yeah. I've been through it. I'm sure you know as well, the ups and downs of okay, where's my energy level at? I need to make sure I pull it back in and make sure I come back to myself. And I've just found, over time, when I've listened to myself, after a day of seeing 3 clients in a row with a short break, I'm a little bit done if I don't do some inner work for myself. Like, oh, I need to meditate. Or I need to do some stretching. Or whatever it is, to come back to me. Because I can't go a full 8-9 hour day just moving through client after client without some kind of structure with that. But it seems to be working. Are you familiar with heart math, by chance?

Allison: I've heard of it, but I don't know much about it.

Amie: I actually work at a neuro-feedback clinic. So, we do neuro-feedback and EMDR. So, it's basically a trauma clinic. And, I've added in heart math, which is a way of tracking your heart rhythms to see if you're in a state of stress or state of calm. And for a while I was doing it for my clients, and every time they would come in. and then, you know how we like to do things for other people and then we realize, oh wait, I haven't done that for myself, right? And, I'm like, oh, why haven't I, I'm teaching everybody else this, I haven't even done this for myself in months. So, I hooked myself up to it. And it just makes such a big difference. I'm like, wow. Just two minutes between each client. That's all I have to do.

Allison: That's awesome.

Amie: isn't that amazing?

Allison: Yeah.

Amie: Just breathing, right? As much as I tell my clients, let's breathe, it's like a whole different experience. Yeah, for yourself.

Allison: That's so cool.

Amie: Yeah, so cool. I know. And one piece of it is, the neuro-feedback equipment is much much too much for my budget right now. And so, I think another piece of this financial charging a lot piece of it is that, it's not a lot. It's more than I charge now. But, with neuro-feedback, if I don't take that with me, then, I'm going to be doing EMDR. And I've got this idea in my mind that well, I'm not a specialized now as a clinician. Because neuro-feedback, we were the only provider in the area. And now, I won't be doing that. and so, it makes me feel like, I don't know, maybe it's that worthiness thing. you know? coming up again. It's like, oh, I need to add more. Need to do more. So that I can offer more to my clients, essentially. But I don't think that's very effective.

Allison: That's not true. There may be plenty of EMDR therapists in San Diego where you are moving. But it doesn't mean that you're going to be left out on the porch. There are plenty of clients, too.

Amie: Right. That's true.

Allison: And are you interested, if you had the money, would you do neuro-feedback? Is that some equipment you'd want?

Amie: I would.

Allison: So, does your \$175 accommodate you purchasing that in a set period of time?

Amie: It does, actually. Yeah. it would make it possible for me to do it. Which I think is a big part of it, is that, that could be the investment towards the equipment for down the road. So, yeah. huge commitment. But I've been doing this work for about three years. And I used to love it. I think it's incredible to see people change that quickly without even having to talk through it. Which is kind of [inaudible 17:42] But, yeah. thank you so much. Yeah, I really appreciate it.

Allison: Absolutely. We'll see you around the Party, so as you're building your website and getting your PTD copy together, share it in there and get feedback from the party people.

Amie: Oh, that's a great idea. Yeah. I never do that. so that's something I should try. Okay, thank you. I appreciate it. It's so nice meeting you.

Allison: Yeah.

Amie: You live in North Carolina. Is that right?

Allison: I do. Yeah. yeah.

Amie: Awesome. My sister lives in Charlotte. I'm not sure how far that is from you.

Allison: two hours. Not far at all. Just in the mountains, west.

Amie: Well, you know what, when I come out there, maybe I'll send a quick group chat, saying I'm in the area. Because I would love to meet up with just more therapists in general. I think.

Allison: Yeah.

Amie: or the tribe to go to.

Allison: Absolutely.

Amie: It was so nice meeting you. I hope you have a great rest of your day.

Allison: You, too.

Amie: Bye.

Allison: Bye.

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