

**EPISODE 59**

[INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:04.1] ANNOUNCER:** Welcome to the Creative Empire Podcast. Each week, Reina Pomeroy, the life and biz success coach, and Christina Scalera, the attorney for creatives, are taking you up close and personal with successful influencers in the creative community and tackling your biggest business hurdles. Their mission is to help you, creative entrepreneurs, think beyond your daily biz so you can make the brave decisions that build your Creative Empire.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:00:36.9] CS:** Hello, welcome back for another episode of the Creative Empire Podcast. I am Christina Scalera; I'm joined by Reina Pomeroy.

**[00:00:42.4] RP:** Hi everybody!

**[00:00:43.3] CS:** And today, our guest is Jessica Peddicord of Simply Jessica Marie Designs. Is it [simplyjessicamarie.com](http://simplyjessicamarie.com), Jessica?

**[00:00:51.0] JP:** Yes, it's [simplyjessicamarie.com](http://simplyjessicamarie.com).

**[00:00:52.5] CS:** Awesome. So Jessica is not only a hymn lettering, calligraphy, brush lettering, watercolor artist, she also is the creator of several online courses, and passive income products. We are so excited to talk to her today about how she got there, what she's done to really stand out as a leader in the industry, and with that being said, I would love, Jessica, if you could just tell us — give us some background for the listener that might not be familiar with your work yet or your site yet, where can they find you, and how did you get started?

**[00:01:22.7] JP:** Yeah, well first of all, thank you so much, ladies, for having me. I'm really excited about this. Your podcast has recently become one of my favorite ones to listen to while I am painting or doing a calligraphy project, so I'm just really excited to join you guys, and hey to

all the listeners! I'm so excited to talk with you guys today. So my business actually started — some of you might not know this — but I started in the creative industry as a wedding planner.

So similar to Reina, that was my background. I loved it for a while, but then quickly realized that the logistics side of things wasn't really my strong suit, and my passions were more toward the visual storytelling aspect of the wedding industry, and really being able to connect with my clients in that way. So I took a leap, and went full-time with my business about two years ago, and I have loved it so far. So my focus is on wedding invitations, brush calligraphy, and watercolor art.

I love working with clients who have as strong of a passion as I do for really communicating their love story through the visuals of their invitation suites, and their day-of details and yeah, I feel so blessed to be able to work with sweet clients every day.

**[00:02:28.9] CS:** Tell us a little bit about the kind of clients that you like to work with, and how you created a really nice niche around the watercolor aspect of your business, with portraits, and the really unique brush lettering that you do have. I think you have a really great style, and it's a style that I haven't seen replicated elsewhere, which is actually — full disclosure, I met Jessica at one of her workshops, which was amazing, and taught me all about brush lettering. What made you decide that watercolor is where it was at?

**[00:02:56.1] JP:** Definitely, that's a great question. So, I had been painting my whole life, and I started out when I was really little, and it had been more of a side project for me. But then when I first started working with the wedding planner in Nashville, painting naturally came as a side hobby and a way for me to branch into my business, so it was natural once I started receiving request for wedding paintings, to translate that into wedding invitations.

I hadn't really seen a whole lot of it out there as an alternative to the save-the-dates, which are beautiful wedding photos; I hadn't seen a whole lot of wedding painting featured in save-the-dates. So I started offering that as an idea to some of my clients who were interested in incorporating their engagement photos into their invitation designs, but in a more artistic way.

Developing my brush calligraphy style came naturally as I was designing, and looking for fonts but wasn't exactly finding what I was really trying to be able to provide my clients, which is more of a custom boutique approach to their designs.

So completely original to them, and I picked up a calligraphy set, and just started playing around with it a bit on my own, and took a few years to develop my own style, which is more whimsical and a casual approach, rather than the more traditional style. So it took some time for me to get into the exact style that I love, but I would encourage you to play around with different techniques and approaches before finding your own unique design style.

**[00:04:20.9] CS:** Yeah, and if you're just getting started, where is a good place to start? I mean, a lot of people don't know where to even start with calligraphy. You know, do you buy a set somewhere, do you take a course, do you go to a workshop? What are some options that you see are great for new calligraphers?

**[00:04:36.5] JP:** So I started on this awesome website called Skill Share. I'm not sure if you all here listening have heard of it, but it's skillshare.com and they have a monthly subscription where you can take a bunch of different online courses from creatives, and my very first class was with a calligraphy artist called Molly Jacques, and she is wonderful. Her style was more of a pointed pen style. I love Skill Share, because it's a really affordable way to dip your toes in the process.

So if you are really new to things, and wanting to try something for the very first time, I would highly recommend going there for your beginning course. Then after you've gotten your hands messy with some paint, or some nibs, or anything like that, then possibly investing in a different in-person workshop, or something that is a little bit more tailored to the exact style that you are looking for.

**[00:05:22.6] CS:** How did you get into teaching, because a lot of people want — we haven't talked on the podcast yet about online education too much. We had Ashley Lercott of the Modern Calligraphy Summit on, but she's not necessarily a teacher. So what it is like to teach people, and what are some things that you run into as a teacher that you really like?

**[00:05:42.9] JP:** Yeah, so I absolutely adore teaching. I think that a part of the reason why I like it so much is because I'm the oldest of three kids, and I have that first child syndrome, where I love being the helper. I taught my very first in-person workshop at the Inspired Retreat, which I think have both of you have been to that. I know, Reina, you have, right?

**[00:06:01.7] RP:** I have, yeah.

**[00:06:02.1] CS:** I have not.

**[00:06:03.2] JP:** Yeah, it was awesome. Yeah, she's great. So I got my toes wet teaching in that way, and that was just something that Amber has asked me to do for fun, but I loved it so much that I started to teach more in-person, both watercolor floral and calligraphy classes. The reason why I did so was because a lot of people were commenting on my Instagram, or sending me emails asking for tips about different supplies that I was using, or different methods that I personally had found helpful.

So what I really love the most about teaching in-person workshops is being able to provide that really one-on-one attention to my students, and getting the chance to actually watch their progress as they are going on throughout the class. So the great thing about in-person workshops is that you got to not only view the different styles that your teacher is performing, but then also be able to connect with other people who have a likeminded aspect as you do, and are really interested in taking the next step in their creative journey.

But I am also excited to teach online courses, because I love teaching in-person ones, but I can't be everywhere at once. So I am really excited to be able to expand my reach and get to teach different creatives, not only across the United States, but maybe some people in different countries, which would be really exciting. So I'm excited to chat with you guys a little bit more today about what I find more exciting and interesting about the online courses, as a supplement to in-person workshops.

**[00:07:24.9] RP:** Yeah, that's really awesome that you have made that leap from doing the work to teaching, and I know you still do the work. Teaching is a totally different beast, right?

**[00:07:34.3] JP:** It is.

**[00:07:35.3] RP:** What was that transition like, and what does your workload look like now, now that you are doing both?

**[00:07:42.1] JP:** Yeah, definitely. I have been very intentional about splitting my time between being able to provide the same services to my clients, but also being able to work with other creatives. So I don't personally teach workshops every week, not even every month. I like to do maybe two or three every season at most, just so that I am able to respect my work life balance and not be too crazy about overloading my personal schedule. I have tried to find a really good mix about it.

I know some other artists teach more frequently, like every week or something, which is great but it's just really about finding what's best for your personal schedule and not overwhelming yourself, because workshops do take a lot of effort. They're so much fun, but they take a lot of prep time, and planning, and everything like that. I am not sure if that answers your question, but I think that trying to figure out what works best with your current work load.

Workshops are a great way for me to balance when I have slower seasons, so these past couple of months have been really heavy wedding season for invitation design, so I've cut back on teaching in-person workshops now, but once I get closer to the holidays, and it's not quite as busy as a season for me, then I'll be able to add in some more in-person workshops too.

**[00:08:47.7] RP:** I think that there is a mindset shift that needs to go into prepping for a presentation, and I think a lot of creatives are scared to see themselves as an expert, even if they are really good at whatever they are offering. I'm just thinking of a couple of people who have emailed in, and they are super talented, but I would guess that they would never — at least right now — call themselves an expert. How do you switch your mentality from "I do this thing" to "I can teach this thing"?

**[00:09:19.0] JP:** Definitely, that's a great question. So I actually started teaching only a few months after I had personally felt like I was getting a grasp on calligraphy. I didn't really wait until I was like five years into it and feeling like I was an expert. I was actually listening to something

that you said earlier, Christina, about the value of being able to be alongside the same part of your journey as your students, because you are remembering what it's like to feel unsure of how you're creating brush strokes, or just feeling nervous in general about doing something that is so new.

So being able to start at an early stage in your creative business, I think, is actually more beneficial than waiting until you feel like you have a strong grasp on it, because honestly as creatives, we're never going to feel like we are totally ready. So if you do wait until that point, you might never start teaching. It was really scary at first, honestly, teaching my first workshop.

I was like, "Are these people even understanding what I'm saying? Do they think that I am crazy? Are they actually getting value out of it?", and it wasn't until probably my third or fourth workshop until I felt like I had that system in place, and that workflow going, and felt comfortable really as I was growing through teaching multiple workshops. So it's going to be scary at first, I'm not going to lie to you.

It's a very new thing for us as artists, because we usually do work by ourselves. We're not used to having to explain things to people, but it honestly has helped me grow as an artist too, because by teaching others, I'm having to really get a better understanding of my form, and my craft, and being able to then answer those questions and relate back to them. So honestly, I feel like I learn more by teaching than I would have ever if I didn't go into that role.

**[00:10:57.5] RP:** I so appreciate that, and to give you feedback as a participant in one of your classes, I got to take your class for Creative at Heart in Indianapolis, and I remember doing the peony and I was like, "I am so bad at this, she is so good at this, and why is this so difficult?", and I think that you just have to do it, because you are really good at what you're already bringing to the table, and you're light years ahead of the people that are wanting to take your class, so just that.

**[00:11:26.7] JP:** Yeah, and I address that too, at the very beginning of my workshops, or at least I always try to. I feel like people come into workshop either in-person or online thinking that they are going to be pros at it by the end of the class, but my in-person workshops are only three hours, and I always try to encourage them and say, like, "You are going to get the

foundation of what you're working toward today, but you're going to have to keep practicing. I have been doing this for years, guys. You are going to be so much better in three hours than you are right now, and then three months or three years after that, then you're going to start feeling okay." So it's all right if you don't feel like you've mastered that peony or the alphabet in the very first class you ever take.

**[00:12:03.1] CS:** Yeah, I agree. In just being a participant in your workshop as well, it was so funny, because I have the hardest time getting the right amount — and hopefully any of you who have done watercolor or brush calligraphy, you know what I am talking about — but I have the hardest time getting the right amount of paint on my brush.

**[00:12:19.3] JP:** Yeah, that's always something people struggle with.

**[00:12:21.2] CS:** Because it would run out really fast, and you were really encouraging, and you helped me a lot, and you gave me at least the foundation that I could use to practice on my own. Then when I went home, and I practiced on my own for a couple of months, it took a while, but I eventually got it. I was like, "Oh yeah, she wasn't just making this up". This is not something that magically happens. It did just take a lot of practice at the right pressure.

So I can speak to the fact that you are really good teacher, you're very encouraging, and you've found a really unique niche in the brush lettering, I think. There's not too many people doing that yet, still even. There's a lot of modern calligraphy now, but again, I need to remind people that — I would love to hear your opinion on this, Jessica — but I like to remind people that we surround ourselves with this. So we see it everywhere and we think it's everywhere but it's not.

When I go to legal events, it always amazes me at how bad their headshots are, and it's because they literally have no idea who a photographer is. They don't know who to call. They just Google and book the first one they find on Google, and they don't pay attention to their brand, or their aesthetic, and in this sense, they don't even know that modern calligraphy is a thing, and that's just one sub-set of people.

I'm sure every single person listening could think, oh yeah, my dentist, my whatever. The person at the wine shop — I am looking at a bunch of wine. I'm not an alcoholic, I always reference wine, but seriously.

**[00:13:42.9] JP:** Oh you've got to love wine, it's my favorite.

**[00:13:44.6] CS:** I can only have one glass, and then I'm like, "No, that's enough". But whatever, the person standing in front of you at the grocery store, while it might be something new, or it might be something that we've experienced a lot, it's something that's really new and exciting to them. So what kind of encouragement, or what kind of advice would you have to somebody who's starting out, and all of a sudden, everybody is popped up on Instagram, and they're all modern calligraphers and you know, "Oh I don't have a place anymore" is what they say to you. There is just too many people doing it already.

**[00:14:13.7] JP:** Yeah, that's a really great question. So what I love to encourage people with is to not compare your start to everyone else's either middle season of life, or if they're light years ahead of you, it's okay. Like I started out a few years ago, and my calligraphy skills, and even my website looked nothing like they do right now. I shared an Instagram story the other day about my very first Wordpress blog, and how horrible it looked.

I didn't have anything to even compare it to at that point in time, but you guys have to just really hone in on this fun creative beginning spot in your life, because it goes by really quickly. You are going to start getting into the more busy season of life in the next couple of years as your creative business starts to flourish, and you're going to start missing those sweet starts. I really, really loved just being able to create for the sake of creating, and not have a list of clients to work toward, or thousands of Instagram followers to talk to every day.

Just being able to do something for yourself at the very beginning stage of your business is such a beautiful part of your business, and I hope you just appreciate that, and not just wish that you were five years down the road.

**[00:15:27.2] RP:** I just came across a quote that I read when I started my business, my first business when I was a wedding planner. It was Ira Glass talking about you know that your taste



is further along than where your skills are, and to continue to hone your skill, because you're going to get there if you keep trying. But if you drop out of the game now, you're never going to see that point, and I just thought that that was so inspirational, and I just came across it again last week.

And I thought that that was such a good point, that if you fall out of the game now, you're never going to get to that point where your style meets your talent.

**[00:15:58.9] JP:** Yeah, definitely. I love that quote, like you can't just pick up a paint brush and think you're Picasso. You have to be able to keep working at it, and then get to that point where your hand is able to meet your eye, if that makes sense. Like you are able to portray what you are seeing in your head. I love that quote.

[BREAK]

**[00:16:17.8] CS:** On November 29<sup>th</sup>, we are really excited to have the opportunity to connect with you all, and the way that we are going to do this is via a live focus group. So if you would like to join us, you could go to [creativeempire.co/focusgroup](http://creativeempire.co/focusgroup), and you will be given all the details to join us on this live zoom call that we'll be hosting. In it, we are going to spend time just like we would if you were a guest on our podcast, taking the time to ask you questions, answer your questions, and get to know you a little bit better.

We want to know what it is that you're looking for out of the podcast as we approach 2017. How we can best fit the podcast to your needs and to your wants. So please take advantage of this, it's all free, and we would love to see you there. If you can't make it, please sign over to [creativeempire.co/focusgroup](http://creativeempire.co/focusgroup) where you can also sign up to get the recording, and then if you have some time, watch that recording and maybe even respond to us via email. So it's all going to be at [creativeempire.co/focusgroup](http://creativeempire.co/focusgroup). We hope to see you there!

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

**[00:17:24.8] CS:** For someone that is looking to diversify their income with potentially teaching, do you feel like it's a good industry or a good subset of your business to get into?

**[00:17:36.0] JP:** I definitely do. I know that online courses are really popular right now, and a lot of people are starting to offer e-courses, or workshops that — I think there is a reason behind that, and that's because it is such a great, not necessarily passive income, it depends on how you set it up, but an extra revenue stream, and a way to be able to really show your strengths and your skill level as an artist, even if it is something that you're just starting out with and you're in that baby stage, but you also want to teach — the fact that you're actually interested in teaching is going to show yourself, like position yourself as a leader in your industry.

So it elevates your brand, in a sense, even by starting a course, and I think that you have to think about why you're wanting to start a course. So if you want to teach to be able to reach more people — that's where I am right now, since I can't travel all over the world and be able to teach a lot of in person workshops.

That's the goal for me is to expand my reach, but if you want to do something that's more of a passive income, then possibly doing something where you're setting yourself up on a wider website, such as Skill Share that I reference at the beginning of the class, where you're not personally posting it on your own website. That could be something that's really beneficial for just an extra source of income for you, but for me, I still want to engage with my audience.

So it's not going to be quite as passive. Like I'll probably start a Facebook group to all of my classes, and really be able to check in with my students as they progress along the courses that they take, but yeah, I definitely think it's a very valuable part of your business that you can add onto if it's something that you are really interested in.

Don't feel like you have to do it because everyone else is. If you're not comfortable teaching people, don't feel like it's something that you need to do. But if it is something that you really feel that would be something that you are interested in doing I would say go for it.

**[00:19:18.1] RP:** Yeah, I think teaching courses really sets you up for different kinds of opportunities in the future, like you said. You're positioning yourself as a leader, and you have an opinion. I think having a course really shows that you have an opinion on a matter, and this is

something that you want to be known for, and that you have some kind of expertise in this, and the fact that you have an audience that will listen to it.

The other thing that I heard while you were talking about this is it's a passive income product. It's great, but can I ask you about how passive things actually are, and if you can count on a certain revenue, like, number? I don't know if that's even a question, but how do you plan for that kind of passive income stream when it's not really guaranteed?

**[00:20:03.9] JP:** Yeah, that's a great question. I actually have some notes on this, because I was hoping you're going to talk about that, but I would say that for me, what I'm planning on doing with my Extreme Art School, it's not going to be completely passive, especially upfront. People hear the word passive income, and they're like, "Oh yay! I got to do something, and I'm never going to have to touch it again, and I am going to get thousands and thousands of dollars".

But prepping for an e-course is going to take a lot of time. It's been months or years that I am making honestly the ideas for my course, and then more recently, I've spent a couple of days really honing in on the course topics and the work flow, even before I am setting up meetings with my videographer. It's a lot of prep work. So I had a few steps that I hope would be really helpful for anyone who is in this season in life, and wanting to engage in teaching courses.

So very first, I think that it's important to brainstorm your course ideas, and think about all the different ideas that you have, but then narrow it down to either one, if you want to just focus on one at first, or at maximum five that you're launching at one time. My Extreme Art School is going to be set up differently than other courses right now, where I have four core courses, and then I'll be launching new courses as the next semester launches.

But while you are thinking of your different course topics, the way that I approached it was, first of all thinking about what I love teaching, what I think I'm really strong at, but then also what the industry is lacking. While I am going to be teaching some very core principles, such as an intro to watercolor class, and intro to brush calligraphy class, the one that I am most excited about is my digitizing your watercolor class. There's nothing like that out there, and people have been asking me how I do it, and how I get my watercolor so crisp for months that I was like, "This is a

no-brainer” So the fact that people are asking you about a topic pre-validates the fact that it is needed as a course.

The second thing that I would recommend is setting your revenue goals and your course price. I was listening to this podcaster who has a webinar that Teachable was performing, and they set up this, I don't know, goal formula, so this is not something that I created.

So complete props to Teachable, but they said that your revenue goal should be your number of subscribers — they were talking about email subscribers — times a conversion rate, and they set that at 0.02. That's just, I guess their formula for how many people who are on your email list would actually purchase your course, and then take that number and multiply it by your course price, so that will give you your revenue goal.

If you do it backwards, if you have your course price set, or if you want your revenue goal in mind and you want to determine your course price, you flip the formula. I'm at that phase in my process right now. I'm trying to figure out what I want to price it at.

The next step I would say is to actually engage with your audience and send them a survey. So this is something that I had thought about through Christina, one of your topics that you are talking about. I set up a type form, and it was so interesting to get feedback from my audience and see what their struggles are, what their interests are, and again, pre-validating your course topics in that sense.

So the thing that I would recommend doing with the type form is really asking them about their struggles as an artist, and how you could help them, and also making sure to collect to their email then so they can be on the list when you send it out to them.

And then after that, it's really diving into creating your course. So the next step would be to create and record the content, and you can invest as much or as little as you want to with this with modern technology. If you have a computer, you do have a web cam built into your computer. So if you don't have a lot of resources to invest right now, then you can just do that. I'm lucky to be married to a great boy whose brother is a videographer.

So I will be using him, so that's a little perk of marrying into that kind of core family! But after you've had that, then figuring out the best platform for your course. Personally, I think I am going to be using something called Teachery, which is really similar to the platform Teachable that I referenced earlier. Their pricing structure is just a little bit more interesting and appealing to me, but both of those platforms are great, and that allows you to set the course within your own website.

And I, as a designer, love being able to brand my course in that way, and have it all controlled on my end, as opposed to some sort of wider platform like creative market... Not creative market, I'm sorry, Creative Live or Skill Share, but those also have really great benefits too. Like I mentioned earlier, in Skill Share you have other courses taught by other teachers on that platform, so there is an opportunity for other people to reach you aside of having to go to your own personal website.

And then after you have everything recorded, I would recommend sending your course out to a core group of three to five people who can test your courses for you. So before you even launch it, sending it to a group of artists, possibly someone who is a very beginner, who has no experience in what you are doing, someone who is right alongside you in your same level of artistic ability, and then someone who might even be a little bit above you, a little bit more experienced.

They can all provide you with feedback on if you need to tweak anything, or if you're good to go, and then in doing that, then they can also provide you with testimonials that you can then put on your website. People love being able to read other people's experiences, so that would hopefully be super helpful as well.

Then after you had all of that organized, I would recommend growing your audience through either webinars or maybe sending out a mini-course webinar, which are awesome, because you get the chance to really connect with people and answer questions as they have them. So I think that's probably what I am going to do is teaching or leading webinars, and then after that, you get to launching your course space, and I would recommend starting out by educating your audience about what your topic is and why your course is so amazing before you dive into actually selling.

So those are the steps. I know, it's a little bit long but that's something that I would recommend.

**[00:25:55.2] RP:** No, that's awesome. I am guessing that the audience members are taking furious notes on their notepads. My question, first, when I was starting a recording and doing all of my course stuff, was getting over that fear of technology. I was just like, "I don't know how to do any of this. What's going to be enough?", and all of that. Like at the beginning of this year, I hadn't done my first webinar, and I was terrified of that.

So what encouragement can you give somebody who has never done something like that, and is taking it way too far in the process?

**[00:26:27.2] CS:** I had no idea! You do so many nowadays that I have no idea that you hadn't ever done one. You do it quite well. I think it's a testament to how quickly we can come along if we try. So yeah, not to interrupt Reina's question, yeah how would you help someone in that process?

**[00:26:41.6] JP:** Definitely, so I have never done a webinar before either, so I am in that same boat as people who are a little bit nervous. This is something that I would have to tell myself, or something that I have done is be in the student role. So I have been listening to a lot of webinars, and seeing how other people are conducting them, to get a sense of what works best for them, what I might tweak differently, and I've taken some other online courses just as well, just to see how things are run, and what I would feel is better for my personal journey.

So that has helped me instead of diving blindly into it and not having a plan, being able to get a sense of what's worked best for others, and what I would change differently. So that's helped calm my nerves, because I can be a very afraid of technology too. So I don't know, that has helped ease me a lot, so helpfully that will help other people too. There's so many live free webinars right now that are awesome, and all structured very differently. So yeah, I have been listening and taking notes on my own.

**[00:27:35.1] RP:** I love the tip that you gave about just being a student in whatever the process is. So if you are scared of podcasting, but you're listening to podcasts, what does it feel like to

be in that role? Or if you want to write a blog, it's the same kind of thing. Anything that you are scared of, just being that recipient role, I think, is such a good feedback.

**[00:27:55.7] JP:** Yeah, definitely. I was telling Christina before we started that I was listening to so many of these podcasts that you guys have conducted before actually being on the podcast and interviewed myself, because I was really nervous. So I was like, "Oh my gosh, what might it be like, what am I going to be asked? Am I going to ramble, am I going to forget my name? What's going to happen?", but that really helped to calm my nerves down a little bit too. So definitely being a student.

**[00:28:14.4] RP:** You're a total pro.

**[00:28:16.2] JP:** Oh my gosh, thanks.

**[00:28:20.4] RP:** So what's been the biggest eye-opening moment for you as you have taught a few of these courses, and as you are building your next set of courses?

**[00:28:29.6] JP:** Yeah, so I would say the biggest eye-opening thing is, I think, since I have been doing this for a few years, I have gotten so comfortable in my craft that it always is mind blowing to me when people are like, "Oh my gosh, thank you so much for explaining that little detail to me. I had no idea how to even begin this", and just remembering that people, at least the people who usually take my courses, are at the very beginning stages of life, and having to realize that I need to break things down into the very simplest most basic terms for them in order for them to feel comfortable and let loose in their creativity.

So really being able to connect with them on their level has been really interesting as a teacher, and not feeling like, "Oh this isn't important for me to tell them, because they probably already know this". No, they have no idea. This is their very first time picking up a paint brush, so they are obviously not going to know how much water needs to be on the brush for the paint not to get too dry, even though that is something that is second nature to you by now.

**[00:29:25.9] RP:** I love that, yeah. That's such a good point that you have to have the, what is it called, beginner's mind? Go back to the beginning and know what you don't know kind of thing.

I want to have a shirt made that says, “What’s duh to you is mind blowing to others”, because I say it like every episode. Because I think that we always forget what we didn’t know back then.

**[00:29:46.0] JP:** Definitely. Like my biggest fear in teaching is always if people are going to find it valuable, but I mean, like I said, if they’re a beginner, anything is going to be valuable to them because they’re starting from scratch. So yeah, I love that quote that you just said. That’s awesome, I’ll buy that t-shirt.

**[00:30:03.8] CS:** Yeah, I think about this a lot as well, because I am always surprised by the number of people who ask me how do I start an email list, how do I set up my website, how do I do this, or that, and the other thing? And I am not a web developer, or a newsletter consultant, or anything like that per say, and I feel like there’s a lot of resources out there, but it goes to show you when someone gets on, and they find you through whatever means they do find you, they may not be exposed on all the other resources that you have.

And so whatever you can contribute to that is great, and I don’t necessarily think that we need to be the teacher of all things. We might just have a list of resources, like I just have a list of resources they get when they sign up for my email list, but I love that you’re there to provide your skills and your unique voice as a resource to the community and now, especially with building courses and teaching people how to do the same, that’s going to be a really fun and unique offering.

What are some of the things that you’re most excited about in the coming months, for not just the courses, but your business, and how are you gearing up for 2017?

**[00:31:03.0] JP:** Yeah, so I have a lot of really fun things in the works, and I guess by the time that this podcast airs, some of them would have been launched. So the next thing that I am really excited about, not as a supplement to the courses, but something that is for the opposite mindset for designers, I am launching a font, which is something that I had been wanting to do for years. I’m really excited about to be able to connect with an awesome font designer to be able to bring that to life.



I'm actually partnering with Molly Jacques — the artist that I had talked about at the very beginning of the course — her company, Great Lakes Lettering font library. She's going to be helping me with that. So I'm super, super excited about that, even just in being able to implement that into my own product designs.

I have some custom wooden handle stamps that I have in my shop, and right now I am hand lettering all of them myself, but being able to make that process a little bit faster, and being able to provide it to more people, it's going to be exciting. So I'm even excited to use my own font. What else am I super excited about? I am just also really excited to get to connect with more brides who are going to be getting engaged soon, since engagement season is coming up. I was recently, actually last night, accepted into the Blue Ribbon Vendor listing in Southern Weddings.

**[00:32:14.2] RP:** I saw that! Congrats!

**[00:32:15.7] JP:** Yeah, thanks! So I am super excited about that, and hopefully, it will help me to connect with more brides who are of that same mindset as the brides that I currently work with. Along those lines, I am going to be starting a Facebook group for all of my brides so that they can connect with one another, because as a bride who just got married recently, I have a couple of friends who are getting married, but I was really the first of my — at least my college friends who got married.

I had so many questions that my bridesmaids were trying to help me with, but since they weren't in that same season of life, they didn't really have the insight that other brides might be able to have. So I am really excited to connect them, and see how it helps them, but also just create the sense of community within my own brides. I did steal that idea from Katelyn James when I heard her talk about it at the Creative at Heart conference.

That's not a unique idea of my own, but I am really excited to implement it and see how that goes. So definitely the font, the Facebook community, and my courses, those are the three things that I'm most excited about for 2017.

**[00:33:12.5] CS:** Yeah, I'm really excited to see your holiday push.

**[00:33:15.9] JP:** Oh thanks.

**[00:33:17.4] CS:** I love your physical products, and I have your calendar for this year with all the different mixed drinks on them, which are just gorgeous. I mean, I bought it to take pictures of it.

**[00:33:27.9] JP:** Oh my gosh, yeah the holiday products! I really need to start working on that. Probably procrastination is my biggest flaw as a creative. I really get into things way later than I need to. So the products are really taking a little bit of a back burner to my courses, since I really want to get everything out hopefully in time for the holidays, because I think it would be such a fun gift to give to people is the gift of creativity and ticking across, that I am hoping to at least be able to launch holiday cards and stuff like that. Calendars, fingers crossed, but that has been a fan favorite, so hopefully I will be able to do that this year too.

**[00:34:02.2] CS:** I know, I was like, “What is she going to come up with for this year?”, you know?

**[00:34:06.0] JP:** Yeah, I might have to pick your brain about that, because I am running out of cocktail recipes to put on the calendar.

**[00:34:12.5] CS:** But they were very creative and fun last year, and just lots of vibrant colors. We both have colorful brands, and we both love just celebrating that fun aspect of our lives when we can. So if a new creative, or maybe someone who’s a little bit down the road, if they were to reach out to you and they’re trying to build their creative empire, I love that you have teamed up with your original calligraphy teacher to create a course now.

That’s amazing, it’s such a testament to how far you can come in not that long if you really dedicate yourself, and practice, and become — I mean, you’re amazing now at what you do, and our listeners get mad because I tell our guest that they’re amazing, and I’m like, “Well I wouldn’t have them on if I think they’re not amazing”, but no, sincerely your work just gets better and better every time I see a new product. So that’s my metric, because I am not a client all the time.

But yeah, I am curious, what would you tell someone who's just starting out on that journey and maybe wants to do the courses, maybe they're just starting. They're not even doing calligraphy or photography yet, but they know that one day they wanted to be an educator, what tip would you have? Like the one actionable thing that they can do today to go out and build that empire of their own?

**[00:35:23.4] JP:** That's a great question. So I would say that I would not be able to do any of this without a support system, and for the longest time that was my mom, who is not creative. She's a doctor, and it's just been so funny, like I still call her every day, but being able to have a support system of like-minded creatives has been so beneficial.

I'm a part of this amazing Facebook group called the Wedding Stationery Collective, and I post in there basically every day asking questions, and they have such a wealth of knowledge. So connecting with people who are in the same industry as you, and being able to lean on them for support is definitely going to be helpful when you get to the point where you're ready to start recording your live course, or starting that next venture that you are really interested in.

Not only interacting with people who are in your industry, but people who are creatives that end up in your industry. To be able to provide feedback that, like what you were saying earlier might be a duh moment to you, or your creative friends who are also in the same industry, that someone else who's maybe a photographer instead of a calligrapher would be able to provide outside information to has been really helpful. So I am going to be asking those types of people, like calligraphers and artists, as well as non-calligraphers and non-artists, to be able to be those people who are testing out my online courses.

So connecting with people is definitely an amazing way to do so, and you can either do that through Facebook, joining a Facebook group, or possibly even attending different workshops or conferences that are in your industry.

**[00:36:50.0] CS:** I love that, thank you so much Jessica.

**[00:36:52.5] JP:** Of course.

**[00:36:53.3] RP:** Where can people find you online?

**[00:36:55.9] JP:** Yeah, so my website is simplyjessicamarie.com, and simply is a part of the business name. Sometimes when I give that information out over the phone, they just say Jessica Marie, but it is simplyjessicamarie.com, and then my Instagram is my favorite social media platform, and that's just @simplyjessicamarie as well.

**[00:37:13.0] CS:** Thank you so much Jessica, thanks Reina, thank you all of you listeners out there for listening. We're so appreciative of your support and for listening. Go out there and build your creative empire today.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

**[00:37:25.0] ANNOUNCER:** Are you ready to build your own empire? For more information, show notes, downloads, and tips on how to do it, head to [www.creativeempire.co](http://www.creativeempire.co), where you can find out more about this week's episode and the two lovely ladies behind it all, encouraging you to build your own creative empire.

If you enjoyed this week's show, it would mean so much to Reina and Christina if you could take two minutes to go to iTunes and leave a review. It's a little thing that makes a big difference for the show.

[END]