

EPISODE 68

[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]

[00:00:35.6] RP: Welcome back to another episode of the Creative Empire Podcast. It's Reina here, and I have Christina here with me. Today, we are actually chatting with Jamie Kutchman-Wynne, and she is the founder and owner of the artist and gift company called Marigold & Grey. I'm sure you've seen it before, on Instagram especially. She first recognized the need for boutique gift services while she was planning her own wedding, and it became a source of stress.

Not long after, she left an 11-year corporate career in medical and surgical fields to start her business. I'm going to let her tell you this really spontaneous thing that happened, but nonetheless, she's really excited to have found her true calling, and it's the thing that has allowed her to be both corporate and creative, or just business and creative, rather, and I think it's really cool that Jamie has done all the things that she has done. She's actually my Tuesday's Together leader for Bethesda. So Jamie, we're super excited to have you, and can't wait to talk to you more about transitions.

[00:01:33.0] JK: Thank you guys so much for having me. I'm super honored to be here. Yes, I do have an interesting story of how I left my corporate career behind. I'm going to caution you, I don't necessarily recommend that you do it this way per say, but I will tell you the truth about what happened. Like what Reina said, it is true. I did have an 11-year stretch of doing corporate medical and surgical sales. It was extremely demanding, very competitive environment. I

worked on full commission the full 11 years, so basically if I didn't produce, I wouldn't have a paycheck.

[00:02:03.5] RP: Wow.

[00:02:04.4] JK: Yes, so I guess it was a good segue into owning my own business; the pressure that comes along with it, but we will rewind back to when I was planning and dealing with my own wedding back in 2012. I put a lot of time and energy into creating wedding welcome gifts for my guests, because everybody was coming in from out of town. It was a destination wedding. After the point that I found everything to go inside them, I tasked my wedding planner with putting them together and delivering them to the various hotels where our guests were staying.

I am not really sure what happened. There are a lot of different stories, but at the end of the day, some of the gifts got to the correct hotels, and some hotels got no gifts. So at the wedding, some people were bragging about what great gifts they got, and half of my guests didn't get anything at all, and everybody was really offended. So the thought went in my head. It was that lightbulb moment, and you think, "Oh my gosh, if this service existed, I would totally have used it. I would have spent a lot of money just outsourcing it."

You park that thought back in your mind, and you don't really think that you can start your own business when you're embedded in a corporate career. It just seems very far off or really impossible, so I just buried it there. We came back from our honeymoon, I went back to my corporate job, begrudgingly, and then I would say, I don't know, maybe a year later I was getting increasingly more tired of the corporate scene. I had a new VP and a new manager takeover, and they ran things completely differently than how it had been run with my previous management that I grew up on, so to speak.

One day, we were on a conference call. It was myself, and my boss, and my boss's boss, and they were getting on my case about something like a spreadsheet that I didn't do correctly, which I viewed as busy work at that point. They said, "We are going to have to circle back to this, Jamie, in about 30 days." I'm not really sure what came over me, but I said, "Actually, Frank, we are not going to circle back to it, because I resign." I quit right then and there on the

conference call, and just this sense of relief came over me, until I was driving home and I realized that I had to then tell my husband what I had done.

The job that I had had been very secure and very stable. I made a lot of money. In some years I even made more than my husband did, and so it was a big deal to just up and leave that behind, especially without any planning and any consideration for the numbers. So I came home and I said, "I have to tell you this," and he said, "Well that's okay. You've been unhappy for a while. We'll work together. We'll get your resume all pumped up, and you will put your resume out there," and I said, "Oh no honey. I don't need a resume for what I am about to do".

He said, "What is that?" and I said, "I'm going to make gift bags," and essentially his got like pie plates and he panicked a little bit, but that's how it happened. I gave them a month's notice, so I agreed to stay and close out my accounts. I've had some clients, like big, big, big multimillion dollar accounts that I had serviced for 10 or 11 years, so I felt that it was the right thing to do, especially since I quit spontaneously, to close out my accounts properly. Once I did that and my four weeks were up, I woke up the next day and I just literally hit the ground running starting my business.

I didn't really know what I was doing, but things started coming to me fairly easily because of the experience that I had in the past. I basically took my sales and marketing skill set, project management skill set that I had from my previous job, and then applied it to the creative.

[00:05:48.0] RP: Wow Jamie, I mean I know your story, and I am still surprised. So for those of you listening who are like, "Yes, I'm going to quit my job today!" Jamie is saying maybe not do that, right?

[00:05:59.3] JK: Yeah that is absolutely true. So I tell my story, and I almost hate telling it, because I feel like it is a little bit reckless, and it is reckless. I do not recommend quitting in that way. What I should have done is I should have tried to stick it out longer and done my business on the side, maybe on the weekends, if I could have, and kept that income coming in, because that income then could have been taken in to funnel into my business.

Starting a business, especially when you are building a website, always costs way more than you think it's going to. I think mine was double what I thought was going to be once all was said and done, and I wish that I had that income coming in to supplement that, because instead, guess what? I had to pull it out of my own personal savings account to funnel right into the business, and over the last two and a half years every time something has gone on with cash flow, and now I have a studio, and I have payroll, guess what? When something happens, I have to pull from my personal savings account, to bridge the gap occasionally with cash flow. Had I stayed at my career longer, it would have, I think, helped it be a little bit less stressful for me.

[00:07:07.5] CS: Yeah, there's a part of me that says "yes!" and I have the same sentiment, where I wish I'd worked full-time while working on my business, but at the same time I think there is nothing like your fire under your butt like, "Oh wow," that kind of "oh poop" moment.

[00:07:24.2] JK: There's nothing like it, and I will say for my personality, I hate change. I don't do well with change. Had I not done it the way I did it, I probably would still be sitting around to this day talking about, "Oh what a great idea that is," and then seeing other business popping up left and right doing it and then just hating myself for not taking the plunge. So for my personality, I had to do it that way. There was no other choice. What it caused was day one, I was working on the business literally 24/7.

It was almost to the point of being unhealthy, but my fear of failure was intense. I realized what I did to our household finances, and I felt very guilty for that. It actually still drives me to this day. It's a very intense pressure to perform all the time, and I say to people, I worked very hard in my corporate job, and I feel the same pressure that I do now. I probably actually work even more than I did before, but I do actually have a sense of satisfaction now for the work that I put out, which I never had before.

So for me it's definitely worked out. I would just caution you, because you hear a lot of stories, whoever is listening, you hear a ton of stories on social media and everywhere about people who go full-time in their passion, and I feel like it's almost a little bit glamourized, or it is glamourized. It makes it seem a lot easier than it is. So I caution you, before you do that, or

before you think that's the end all be all, really talk to people about what it really means to do that, because it is not as easy as it appears.

[00:08:56.6] RP: Yeah, I think we have this preconceived notion of what entrepreneurship is, like messy bun and getting it done kind of stuff.

[00:09:04.1] JK: Not pretty, it's not pretty.

[00:09:05.3] RP: It's not always pretty for sure, and the cash flow at the front is all going out. It's not coming in, and with a job, hopefully you have that kind of stability where the money is coming in. I think, Jamie, what you're saying is that put that money that you have in that corporate job, or whatever the nine to five type job is, and invest that in your business as you can as a side hustle for as long as it needs to be.

[00:09:27.3] JK: Yeah, and I also want to say that if you're doing this side hustle, and you have income coming in, I think it's awesome, because you can be more choosy about your clients. What that does is that it helps you build your ideal portfolio to then turn around and attract your ideal client a lot faster. Whereas, if you do what I did and you quit so abruptly, you'll be like, "Oh my gosh, I got to get some revenue, I've got to get stuff in," and you can't really be as choosy in who you're working with if you need to pull in and just pay the bills.

Now for me, I was fortunate, because I had a very sizable income previously, and I saved and banked and stashed a ton of money. So I was able to then turn around and utilize that, but at this point, I sure would rather have that sitting in the bank now than having gone out earlier. So if you're in that stage, and you have a side hustle, and you're still reporting to that fulltime job or whatever it is, don't feel badly about it. Use it strategically to work on your ideal client, because you technically don't have to take any jobs. Take the ones that you want, and don't apologize for it.

[00:10:31.4] CS: Yeah, I think one of the things that I see, and the only part of your tale that was really a red flag for me, not the abruptly quitting, not anything, I am fine with all of that. I think that we need to take risks, and I actually love that. I love doing things that really light you up and are maybe a little bit irrational to outside observers, but make a lot of sense to you in your head.

The only part of that, though, that made the hair stand up on my neck was you never pre-validated your idea.

I would have been very uncomfortable taking a leap of faith like that without knowing that there was some kind of market for it, so I am so glad it worked out. It did work out for you, but I think for listeners, if they wanted to do something similar — I just heard Adrienne Dorison talking the other day on her podcast about this dog idea that she had, and she didn't pre-validate it, and it was fine because she had all these other incomes coming in.

I think we all have a tale like that in our back pocket., where we're like, "This is a great idea. How could this not sell? How could people not just go nuts over this and buy everything?" but I had an idea like that. I thought private yoga in Atlanta was going to be the thing, right? Atlanta is a very ritzy and glamorous market; we've got the Real Housewives, and people just don't care. They want other people to see them in their Lululemon pants, and they don't care about their actual — like there wasn't a market for it.

But I didn't test that out before I quit my job, and so it left me in a really bad position. Obviously recovered since then, but what do you think about pre-validating an idea, and did you do, I mean, you didn't mention it in your story, but did you do any pre-validation that I just didn't pick up on?

[00:12:06.4] JK: Yeah, I did some market research here and there, but looking back, nowhere near what you would call market validation. I've gotten very lucky. I had a gut instinct about what was needed. I knew what I spent on my own wedding, which wasn't even close to what my clients are now spending on weddings, and I just had a gut instinct and I went after it. Now with that said, I did miss the market somewhat, because even anticipating the luxury market, I missed the mark.

I underestimated what people were willing to spend for this service that I am offering, and I built it in an e-commerce site. Yes, I undershot myself to be honest with you. I built an e-commerce site, put a ton of money into it for a platform that will allow you to design your own gifts, and you basically click on that. So you click on your packaging like box, bag, or basket, and then you click on the items you want to go inside, and we get some revenue from that stream to this day.

But very quickly, it became evident that my market was more than that. The bulk of our business is now custom and very high end clients, very high end projects. So they are willing to spend probably quadruple what our clients are spending just using the website. So I thought I was very modern, very up and coming, and my clientele ended up being way far beyond that. They don't want to touch the gifting at all. They don't want to deal with it.

They want me to design it, implement it, deliver it, and all they do is sit back and receive the compliments from their guests. So technically speaking, I probably didn't even need the level of e-commerce website that I had, but what's happened has been a good thing.

[00:13:42.1] RP: Yeah, and you have really created a luxury product. I mean, from the beginning, even though you had that e-commerce stuff to begin with, you have really grown it into this thing where it's the epitome of gift gifting, I think. I think you serve a very specific niche. What advice do you have for somebody who is looking at an industry that they're maybe starting to want to build, but have no idea that this is something that is "needed"?

[00:14:10.7] JK: Like we touched on before, I would say absolutely talk to the people that you think or imagine would be your ideal clients. Have a lot of conversations, even if you have to pay to get some market research done. I think it's well worth it before investing thousands and thousands of dollars into a platform. Looking back, I wish I had done that.

[00:14:31.1] RP: Yeah for sure, and I think that a lot of the markets are saturated now, but there's always opportunity for new development and new ways of doing different things, and so if somebody is in a saturated market, how can they differentiate themselves and find their version of a blue ocean, rather than a blood infested ocean?

[00:14:52.2] JK: Right, I love that book. That was actually one of the first books that I read when I started my business, but anyway, I think that it's very important to know who you are and what you bring to the table. Put your blinders on and don't look around at what everyone else is doing, and really be you, because if you do you, there will be a tribe of people that will be attracted to that and they will find you.

But if they come to your website and they can't clearly define what your style is, what you bring to the table, and they don't identify with it because you are too all over the place, you're never going to attract anybody. So I think my advice would be that in the beginning, get your head around the fact that not everybody is going to buy something. Not everyone is going to be your ideal client, and that is absolutely positively okay. You're going to go through a lot of inquiries where you don't actually get the business, and that's all right.

What you put out in your blog, and social media, and out into the universe needs to be representative of, I think, your best work, and work that really represents the work that you want to continue having. The more that you do that, the better increase that you'll start to see, because people will be coming to you for that reason.

[BREAK]

[00:16:06.5] CS: Morgan Frankie of Frankie & Lenee Weddings says that, "Reina and Christina make my days happy. It amazes me how much info these ladies fit into their short episodes. I am always making little notes in my tablet next to me while I'm listening. Thank you so much for putting this together. You all are wonderful". Thank you, Morgan, and we really appreciate you listening. She even calls us her favorite podcast, so this is super sweet.

We love seeing your feedback. Please do go leave us a rating or review on iTunes. It takes literally 30 to 60 seconds, and it makes a huge difference for us as podcasters to hear what you have to say about the show, especially if it's good stuff, but if there's some other things that you want to leave us as feedback, please feel free to email us. We are always looking to provide the best content for you, our listeners, not for ourselves. So again, leave us some ratings, some reviews on iTunes, or email us hello@creativeempire.co.

[BACK TO INTERVIEW]

[00:17:03.1] CS: I love that you just mentioned the thing about ideal, clients because so many people come to me and they're like, "Oh my gosh, I am not my ideal client. How am I ever going to connect with my ideal client? How do I do this? Is it okay that I am not my ideal client?" and

I'm like yes, yes, yes, right? I am not my ideal client. I'm not the person who has a published book, and all these products, and this whole brand out there, right? I'm just me.

I love that you are talking about your ideal client, and how she has a much higher budget than you would have ever imagined, it sounds like, for your own wedding, much more I guess a luxury market, or maybe she's still working in a professional job, whatever, still working. Some people actually like working in professional jobs. So maybe that's her career, I should just say that. To a career woman, it sounds like luxury market, but essentially not you.

And so how did you find that ideal client, and how did you really discovery that she wasn't you, and then how do you deal with that since she's not you? How do immerse yourself in situations where you can find her pain points, and figure out how to help her, and really deliver this product that fits her well?

[00:18:16.8] JK: I think for me, this is a little bit tricky to answer, because there are a lot of elements of me that are my ideal client, and I think it's close enough. Now, because I didn't have a half a million dollar plus wedding, that doesn't mean that I can't relate to spending a sizeable amount of money on a wedding, and wanting everything to be completely taken care of so that I won't have to worry about anything. So I think that I relate enough.

If, speaking to listeners who might not relate really at all, that's when you want to read about, talk to, spend time around people that you do perceive as your ideal client, and just ask a ton of questions. Ask what would make their life easier, ask, ask, ask, survey, do surveys. Whatever you can to learn about them and get in their head as much as possible will be extremely useful.

[00:19:05.9] RP: I think that's spot on. I have a quick question about product-based businesses, because we've interviewed a lot of service-based business, and I think yours is a mix of both. Clearly, you are working with clients and custom designing things. So in that way you are a service, but in the commodity sense, you are a product-based business.

I'm wondering if you have any advice, or any kind of tips or tricks for people who are wanting to get started with product, but maybe don't have enough space, or maybe don't have enough

dollars? I think that the cash flow thing is really different in a product-based business, and I am curious to see if you have any advice around that.

[00:19:40.4] JK: Yeah, on a very high level answer, I don't view myself as a product-based business. I think if I did, I think I wouldn't survive, because anybody could just come along and replicate the business very easily, because I have bags, I have boxes, I work with vendors, candles, and snacks, and food and everything. So people could just look at my Instagram, look at my blog, and figure out, "Oh what is she using?" and then replicate it to a tee.

All of our stuff is on Pinterest. They can easily go and make it themselves. So in that respect, I am not really bringing anything to the table, but I focus on the service that I provide that wraps around the products, and I feel like that's what makes us successful. It is very exciting for, I think, the recipients of our gifts. They have a great experience. They're very delighted, they're like, "Wow, this is the nicest thing I have ever received!"

Sometimes we hear that feedback, but our goal is to make it that enjoyable of an experience for our clients, who are also the gift-giver, and so my mentality I feel like stretches beyond products. For businesses that you just want to figure out how to bring product in, I would definitely not commit to any type of volumes too early, because again, you don't know what's going to sell. You might think you do, but you don't really know what's going to sell.

So try to buy in smaller quantities and not over extend yourself, because it's funny like, what my favorite items are, really are not the ones that end up selling the most. They sell, but not the most, and that's dangerous if you think about it. So you really have to test the market in that regard big time, so you don't outlay all of your cash and then you're left with nothing.

[00:21:20.7] RP: That's so interesting. I hear that quite a bit, actually.

[00:21:23.3] CS: Yeah, I would say the same exact thing. I think a contract template in my shop is going to sell so well, and then I'm like, "Oh, that didn't sell at all!" but this one over here, random thing, is going really well. So what I started to do is put things on pre-sale. So do you put things like that in your custom — I guess now it sounds like you're not even really allowing

people, I mean they have the option obviously, but it sounds like now you're just doing the custom design and not so much the drive by.

[00:21:48.7] JK: Well no, we do a big percentage of custom, but we also have an online shop and we sell gifts.

[00:21:55.4] CS: Like the pre-designed?

[00:21:56.6] JK: Exactly, and they're ready made, ready to go. We always have them on stock. You can order one at a time, and they ship directly to the recipient if that's what they want. So basically when I designed that collection, I took into consideration what things had done well in my custom side of the business for a long time. So the look, size, how many items go into a gift, like that kind of thing.

I really studied past projects, and then designed them based around those same themes. It's funny, we tracked our bestsellers and there really isn't one. Maybe there's one, but beyond that they're all equal. We just can't predict what it's going to be, but they're all liked evenly.

[00:22:35.6] CS: So when you are coming up with new product ideas for those done-for-you designs that people can just go into your website and purchase like that, are you may be pulling them together and taking a picture first, and then seeing if that sells? Or do you have those ready to go, then it is like, we're all in?

[00:22:53.3] JK: We're all in. Again maybe I am being reckless in this way, but after studying the designs that have done well in our custom projects, I design around that same aesthetic. Then I also take into consideration the occasions that people are buying for, and so I do it, I do it really for that and I focus on those areas, so it's quasi tested I guess you could say. It's tested enough to give me comfort to move forward.

[00:23:18.7] RP: I love this. One of the things — I'm going to plug one of your products, because I think it's something that I wanted when I was a wedding planner. The signature restroom amenity basket.

[00:23:27.6] JK: That one is so funny.

[00:23:28.8] RP: It's such a funny thing, but there are so many people who do it but they don't do it well, and I think that yours is just like that one and done, and it's part of your shop, and it's done and ready to go, and so if you're a wedding planner, please check this out, just saying, for your brides and grooms.

[00:23:43.8] JK: Thank you Reina, it is actually funny, because when I first came out with that, I thought to myself, I'm doing restroom baskets. Like, what? I was like, "I never thought I would start a business and make bathroom baskets," but that was a direct result of listening to the market. We got so many requests for them, and it was like I'm tired of making up a different restroom basket every single time. It really was not efficient. It wasn't even worth it, and so I said okay, this is it.

We're going to design one. It's going to have one design, that's it. We'll put it on the website, and it's been a great thing, but I did not start out doing that. I guess that's a good point for listeners, because you do also have to listen to your market and you have to be willing to pivot where the market is dictating. Listen to your customers, because they'll tell you what they want.

[00:24:32.4] RP: Yeah, for sure. So we're going to pivot a little bit and talk more about transition. So you have had another big transition as of late, and before you were doing all of your design in your home, and now you have transitioned into a beautiful studio. So talk us through what happened and how you made that big leap.

[00:24:54.4] JK: I didn't have a choice. It was blatantly obvious that it was time. In fact, I never thought it was possible, because I guess maybe I don't dream big enough, but I never could really imagine myself having my own space. I knew I wanted it, and I knew it would be great someday, but I guess I didn't think I would get to that point as quickly as I did. We at first had the business in the basement, and then all of a sudden, we had multiple builds going on or builds that were so sizeable that they couldn't be built just in the basement.

They were in my living room, my dining room, my foyer; my front porch became shipping and receiving. We had pallets dropped off and left in the yard. I mean, it was getting to be insanity,

and so I realized very quickly that if I couldn't scale the business, if I didn't get more space — because we were literally at capacity where we could not take on any more jobs at the same time, and as a growing business, that is not a good thing.

[00:25:51.1] RP: Yeah, and your house is really big too. It's not a small house.

[00:25:54.4] JK: It was not enough. It still wasn't enough, so I started looking around for commercial space. A space became available, but it wasn't going to be ready for six months because the tenant gave notice, but he wasn't going to move out for six months, but I knew in my gut that it was the right space. It was close to home. It was not overpriced, and it was at grade, so there were absolutely no stairs going up and down, and also it got a decent amount of natural light, which is important for photoshoots and things like that.

So I was willing to sign the lease, pay two months' worth of rent, wait on it for six months, and hope and pray that that tenant actually moved out. I talked to my team and I said, "I know we're ready to move out right now, but we're going to have to just suck it up and put up with it, because the space that we're getting is going to be perfect for us," and that's exactly what has happened. So yeah, we moved in September, and I have to say my stress level has gone up significantly, because the overhead is a pressure that I've never had before.

Even though I knew it was coming and I prepared for it, it still is a level of pressure as a business owner that I never had before, so it has been a major transition for me mentally to have that big rent payment on my shoulders every single month. At the same time, guess what? If I didn't make that commitment and sign the lease, I could not scale the business. So it was time. I think some transitions, even if they're right, they don't necessarily always feel comfortable, because they're not always safe. At the end of the day, it's everything like that is going to be a risk.

[00:27:27.1] RP: Yeah, I love that, and even if you're not renting a space, there's always some level of risk that we need to take as business owners. Whether it's just making a small switch in your business, or renting out a space, or buying new camera gear; whatever it is for your particular profession.

[00:27:45.7] **JK:** Yeah, whatever decision, yep.

[00:27:47.0] **RP:** Right, and so how do you balance the risk versus possible reward for you?

[00:27:53.1] **JK:** So I have to look back at the original decision that I made, and I do it quite frequently lately, actually. I look at the decision that I made to leave behind the career that I had. It was a position that people probably would have killed to have, and competitive field to get into, and I left it behind. So when I look at that, and I look at how far I've come from that point, it settles me down a little bit, and my anxiety gets a little bit less, because I realize if I can do that and make it this far, then I can certainly do whatever it is that I am facing at the moment. So I take a look back, actually.

[00:28:26.9] **RP:** Yeah, and Christina, you've been through a lot of big transitions too like this. You've left big, what's the word I am looking for? Just like, prestigious jobs, and you left a big career in law, and now you're doing law again, but it's different.

[00:28:39.5] **CS:** Right.

[00:28:39.9] **RP:** How do you feel about that transition?

[00:28:41.8] **CS:** My transition or Jamie's transition?

[00:28:43.4] **RP:** Yeah, just in general? Just making that decision of the risk versus the reward.

[00:28:48.0] **CS:** Yeah, it's never going to be comfortable. If it's comfortable, then you're not going to be successful, because I think Jamie and I, it sounds like we're very similar in that. If we have a floor under our feet, we're not going to take action, but when that floor drops out, that's where when you get going. Gosh, I am so bad at metaphors, but anyway that's when the pavement hits the road or whatever that is, I don't know, the rubber meets the road. That's what I am trying to say.

Yeah, so I think with transitions — and I am actually, a secret, I am going through a transition in my personal life. Just some things going on with my law firm, and reorganizing, and things like

that. So definitely, I'm in a transitional period right now, and it's definitely uncomfortable, and we're trying to figure things out, but I really wouldn't have it any other way.

I think the important thing for me is just to always remember that this is just a season of life. It's not life, and there's still a lot of things that I look forward to each and every day. Then just looking for that light of whatever situation is maybe difficult to go through right now is always really helpful, but yeah, I resonate a lot with what Jamie is saying about her transitions and the way that it wasn't comfortable. I was just there with my office space. I actually had an office, and I still have that office — doing air quotes — because I made the decision to actually get rid of it as a daily commute office space.

And now just have a digital office space, where I send my mail there, and I work there one day a week, but it was because of the overhead. I was paying hundreds of dollars every month for an office, and I would end up working out of my house. That was really hard, and that was hard on my bottom line, and I felt like I could serve my clients better and keep my prices cost effective if I got rid of that space, and so that was a hard decision to make. So I really am resonating with everything you're saying Jamie.

I think another thing that, just one last thing I wanted to mention is that sometimes — right now I'm in an uncomfortable spot with one of my contractors. I'm paying her more than I really am — not that I can't afford it — but I am paying her more than I am comfortable as far as my bottom line and my finances, but I know that it's essential if I want to get to that next level of my business. That's been a pattern that I've had to go through this whole year, is not having help, hiring help it's really expensive, and then it pays for itself, and then I grow.

[00:31:12.6] JK: Right, but it feels bad in the moment, and that's the reality of it.

[00:31:16.9] CS: Yeah, so with your space now, you are able to accommodate more clients probably, but maybe the work load hasn't caught up to that? Is that safe to say?

[00:31:25.6] JK: Well yes, and it's interesting, because we're cyclical to a certain extent. We have a huge boom during wedding season, and then when wedding season tapers off, we have a small little low, which is like right now, going into holiday season, and then it's engagement

season, and then it picks right back up again. But it was an interesting time to move in, because it was scaling towards the end of wedding season. So yeah, it's very scary, and cash flow is definitely an enemy.

It's something that keeps me up at night, but again, if you don't take those chances, you're never going to scale or be able to grow. I actually get a lot of people, I have random people message me on Instagram even saying, "Hey, I need some advice. How do I know when it's time to hire somebody? I think that I could use them for this, that, and the other, but how did you know it was time to hire somebody and make that transition from just yourself to a team?"

And I said, "Well for me, I never really officially felt ready as in comfortable, but I was willing to take the risk when I sat down and said to myself, "I cannot take on anymore business without help, because if I don't hire somebody then I am stagnant. I am staying right where I am today, and that is not enough for me." So that's I guess how I make decisions. If I can't move forward without doing it, I am forced to do it, and then I take the angst that goes with it and I just figure out a way to stomach it.

[00:32:49.8] CS: I couldn't agree with you more. I think part of, and this is why we're all about helping you leave your nine-to-five, but with your eyes wide open. You have to know that if you do enter into the world of working for yourself, it's stressful. Things don't go away, it's not any better. The grass isn't any greener. It's just different, and so whereas the stress before was maybe coming from an inconsistent boss who was happy one day, sad or angry the next day, and you really didn't know what; that's a huge source of stress I think for most people that are still in corporate, is the inconsistency of their company and the way they interact with them or whatever other work situations are plaguing you.

Just co-workers that don't understand you, lots of busy work, whatever it is that you think is holding you back. I think it's different on the other side, right? If you work for yourself, I don't care how much money or revenue you make, you are going to be stressed out sometimes with your expenses, and your overhead, and so thank you so much for opening up and sharing about this, because this is something we haven't covered yet on the podcast.

[00:33:53.2] JK: I appreciate it. I don't even know, but maybe I am coming across as a Negative Nelly, but I...

[00:33:58.6] CS: No, you totally aren't.

[00:33:59.9] JK: Behind all the pretty, and all the things that people see online, I think it's beneficial for people to hear and see what really goes on behind the scenes. When I say behind the scenes, I don't mean like a pretty behind the scenes that everybody shows. I mean like a real, true, down and dirty behind the scenes, and what it really feels like to go through those stresses, and why people do it, and when it's right for somebody and when it's not. I don't think everybody is cut out for it, to be honest.

[00:34:27.0] RP: Yeah, and that's what I love about going to your Tuesdays Together. In DC, there's five or six of them and I always go to yours, even though it's an hour away, because you are the real deal. People are inspired by the fact that you tell it like it is, and you don't just fluff it up for easy sake. You really do give us the behind the scenes that is not as pretty as Instagram.

[00:34:49.8] JK: Thank you, Reina.

[00:34:51.5] RP: Of course. I mean, you know that I love seeing you. So before we wrap it up, tell us, what does your empire look like in the future?

[00:34:59.1] JK: I think for now, I am not focused on huge lofty dreams of expansion, even though that's there, and that's in my heart, and I want to do that. 2017, I want to grow sizably. We doubled our revenue this year from the year prior, which was awesome, but I want to do that again. I want to even out our blend between custom business and e-commerce business. So I have very specific goals that I want to meet in 2017, and then once that is situated, my goal is to definitely expand into other locations throughout the country.

[00:35:35.1] RP: That sounds awesome, and where can everyone find you Jamie?

[00:35:35.1] JK: So our website which is marigoldgrey.com, and then Instagram is @marigoldgrey.

[00:35:50.8] RP: Awesome, well thank you so much for giving us the real deal Jamie, and if you're listening...

[00:35:55.4] JK: Thanks ladies.

[00:35:56.5] RP: Absolutely, we're so excited for people to hear this, and to be encouraged by the fact that if you really work hard and take those risks, that you can do what the kind of success that you've built.

[00:36:07.1] JK: Oh, absolutely.

[00:36:08.2] RP: Go build your Creative Empire.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[0:36:13.3] 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, 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]