Transcript

David Steele: Welcome to how to get clients and get paid what you’re worth. I am David Steele. I am Founder of Relationship Coaching Institute, the first and largest international relationship coach training organization. I founded it 16 years ago. It’s been quite a journey since.

One of the things that qualifies me, that makes me a very good candidate to pass along what I’ve learned about getting clients and getting paid what you’re worth is my experience in mentoring and training thousands of graduates at Relationship Coaching Institute in addition to my own practice. I’m really in the catbird’s seat of what works and what doesn’t work in getting clients and building a successful private practice to the point where I ended up writing a book about that, The Million Dollar Private Practice. It’s published by John Wiley & Sons.

I got started in the helping profession and got my very first counseling job in 1978. It seems so long ago. I don’t feel that old though. It may be because I keep ahead of trends. I just love gadgets and new strategies. I really like to make sure that I’m on the cutting edge of things. Maybe that keeps me young.

I was licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist in 1985 and started my private practice. I specialized with couples for many, many years. I really struggled getting clients. I did what other therapists do. I signed up for insurance panels and managed care. I got clients that way. That was wonderful.

However, I got paid a fraction of my hourly rate from those clients. I had a full practice of clients but I was getting paid a fraction of what I could have and should have been paid. I was grateful to have the business and grateful to make a living. I really had no clue about how to get private pay clients. I really had no desire to market or put myself out there. I had no idea how to do that.

Back then, there was very little information about marketing for a private practice. I found a workshop on the topic. It was expensive. I tell you, the main take away was to ask for the referral and how to design a Yellow Page ad. Those were the main take aways from that workshop.

This is before the internet. The Yellow Pages were huge. I had a very good Yellow Page ad. It really worked. It addressed couples in crisis. I got lots of calls from couples looking for help, looking for a therapist to help save their marriage. When they called to make an appointment
with me, I absolutely knew what to do with them. I opened up my appointment book and made
an appointment with them.

When they asked me questions like “How much do you charge?” “What’s your success rate?”
“Where did you get your training?” Of course, these people are uncomfortable getting help.
They’re feeling very, very vulnerable. They’re in a situation where they’re scared. They want
some assurance that I’m credible, I’m effective, that I can really help them. That if they spend
money with me it’s going to be worth their while. I had no idea how to answer those questions
and my enrollment from those calls was very weak.

There were no strategies, no teaching, no training for if somebody is considering working with
you; how do you actually enroll them? I’m going to right that wrong today. I’m going to share
with you everything I’ve learned about how to enroll a client. I’ll tell you, I’ve learned a lot of
these things the hard way. Probably in my life and in my business, the most valuable lessons
I’ve learned are from the things that did not work.

Let me give you an example. Early in my private practice career when I was really burning out
on all these managed care clients, getting paid a fraction of my hourly rate and I wanted to get
more private pay clients into my practice, I looked around for a marketing consultant. I figured I
need some help. I need somebody who understands marketing and how to get clients.

I found a local marketing consultant. I had a meeting with him. He convinced me... I allowed
myself to be convinced, I’ll take responsibility for it, that a direct mail campaign is the way to
go. I could reach of tens of thousands of potential clients in my area for pennies apiece. All I
would need would be a very small fraction of those, 1% or half a percent. I would have a full
practice. That sounded very exciting to me. It sounded very easy; just send out a mailer and
answer the phone.

How many clients do you think I got from that? The answer is zero. The whole thing cost me
$8,000, to design the mailer, to mail it out, to pay the consultant, $8,000. Back then, that was a
lot of money to me. I figured it was an investment in my business. If it worked to get me clients,
it would be well-worth it. It was a flop. It really taught me that number one, marketing people
that might be very good at marketing for other business don’t necessarily understand private
practice.

Number two, when you are marketing a personal intimate service like what we do as private
practice professionals, direct mail doesn’t work. You know this; that people need to know you
so they can trust you. You really need to connect with them in order to get them to say yes to
hiring you, to want to work with you and to pay you good money out of their pocket for doing
that. That is a big leap for most people. That’s why it’s so hard for us because how do we
support them to make that decision to invest in themselves when it’s even hard for us to do?
That’s a little bit about how I got my start, how I learned things the hard way and also why I’m
excited to share this information with you today.
Let’s go ahead and get started. How to get clients and get paid what you’re worth; first question for you, do you feel guilty charging for your services? Most private practice professionals, we’re well-intentioned. We want to help. We want to make a difference in the world. Charging money and money in itself can be a little challenging for us.

Here’s some reasons for that. One is if we have the student mentality that we have a profession that we are constantly learning and the needs of our clients and how we want to help them always seems to be a bit above what we are able to do or know. That’s a good thing. You need to constantly learn, constantly get better. However, if you graduated school and you graduated your training and you have worked with clients successfully, you are no longer a student. You are a practitioner.

It is good to be a lifelong learner and to continue to improve. I’ve seen many practitioners who just feel unworthy like they don’t know enough yet. I can certainly relate to that. One thing that holds us back when charging for our services and feeling guilty about it is we feel like we don’t know enough yet. We’re still students.

Next is the charity mentality. This is where we really want to help or make a difference in the world. We feel good just giving it away. It does feel good. However, it’s not sustainable. We can’t make a living if we give it away. If you feel called, if you have a mission to make a difference and to help people, for you it’s not really about the money. I know for me that’s absolutely true. It is absolutely not about the money. I have to make a living. I’m on this planet to make a difference in the world. I feel a very, very strong calling to do that. This can really get in the way of charging for your services.

Next is the empathic mentality. This is where you really feel for your clients and potential clients. You really have a hard time charging them when they feel like it’s expensive or it’s hard for them to afford. When they say, “Gee, I’d really like to but I can’t afford it”, you just want to accept them as clients anyway and do it for free because you really empathize with them. It would be hard for you to pay that amount of money. You have empathy for them. That’s holding you back and helping them making you feel guilty for charging for your services.

Next is the anti-profit mentality. As helping professionals we look around at the business world. People making millions, billions and trillions selling oil and gadgets and just making big bucks and the focus on profit, on the bottom line, the stock market, the valuations, money and numbers. We are all about people. We want to help people. For us it’s not about the numbers. It’s not about the money. We’re turned off on the idea of profit because of how we see the business world approaching it, being very ruthless and merciless about it, closing companies and laying people off and things like that.

Next is money issues; do you have any issues with money? That’s a trick question because we all do. We all have a bit of scarcity mentality and fear that we might not have enough. Especially if you’re in private practice you are in an entrepreneurial enterprise and you might not be an entrepreneur. What we really want is a paycheck. What we really want is guaranteed income.
However, most of us might have tried to do that, tried to make a living and get a job helping people. If you’ve done that or are doing that right now, you might have experienced what I’ve experienced is that you feel like you’re on a leash. You have to help the people that your employer helps. You have to do it in the way that they want you to do.

We as private practice professionals, we tend to be passionate about helping people, certain kind of people with certain kinds of goals. We are best at getting those results and helping them, doing it our way. A job is not really a good fit for most of us. It’s scary to be out on your own, be in private practice and to be self-employed. We all have money issues. There’s a bit of a scarcity mentality and fear about money that gets in the way of charging for our services.

This is what I’ve noticed that gets in the way. Do you recognize yourself? It’s important to identify your obstacles. I’m a coach now. I am a therapist. I’m still a licensed therapist. I discovered coaching in 1996. I fell in love with it. I am so positive and so goal-oriented. Coaching is such a good fit for me. One of the things that we as coaches recognize is that there will be obstacles. There will be things that get in the way.

The wonderful thing is when you are conscious about what that obstacle is, you’re just aware of it. That by itself takes away 80% of the obstacle. The rest of it is just adjusting what you do a little bit and maybe your attitude about it. 80% of overcoming the obstacle is just being aware of what that damned obstacle is.

I want you to just take a second and take a look at these five mentalities, these five things that tend to get in the way of people charging for their services. Once you identify what is getting in your way? What is your obstacle? What are you struggling with? Once you’re aware of that, I promise you 80% of the obstacle will disappear pretty quickly.

Next question, are your marketing and enrollment effective? This is the formula for a successful private practice, marketing and enrollment. Marketing is communicating what you do, that’s it. Way back when, I thought marketing would get me clients. With that $8,000 direct mail campaign, I learned the hard way that you can market till the cows come home and not get any clients. Marketing by itself doesn’t get you clients. Marketing generates prospects. That’s the primary purpose and outcome of marketing. It will generate prospects for you. Marketing is a good thing. We must market.

The cool, cool thing about marketing is it is simply communicating what you do. That includes sharing information. I’m passionate about relationships. I just love sharing relationship information, strategies and making a difference for people in the world of relationships by blogging, on Twitter, on Facebook and writing articles.

There are so many ways that we can communicate what we do and share information about what we’re passionate about. That is marketing. That will attract people to you. It will build you a list. It will send them to your website. It will have them reading your articles. When they see
something at the bottom of the article, a call to action we call it, they’re likely to click on it. Marketing generates prospects. Marketing is simply communicating what you do.

Most practitioners resist marketing. The three primary modes of marketing are speaking, writing and networking. When you really get into it and you’re speaking to groups about a topic you’re passionate about, when you’re writing about a topic you’re passionate about, when you are networking with people and being of service to them and talking about it with them, about a topic you’re passionate about, you generate prospects and it is fun. It is fun to talk about and be in the flow of your passion.

Most of us when we get past our resistance to “selling ourselves” and we get into sharing our passion, marketing can be fun. What we often do and I’ve done this, is to focus so much on marketing we forget to get clients. That’s the next step. It’s enrollment. You generate prospects with your marketing and then you follow up and convert those prospects into clients. That is what enrollment is.

For today’s program, I’m not going to cover marketing much at all. It’s all about enrollment. This is how you will get clients, get hired, make a living, get paid. Also, it’s important to me that you not only get paid but you get paid what you’re worth. I tell you, it is depressing and a road to burnout to discount your fees to the point where you’re working so hard and making a fraction of what you feel you’re worth to the point that you almost resent your clients. That is not a good place to come from as a helping professional to resent your clients because you’re getting paid so little from them.

You getting paid what you’re worth means that you make a comfortable living. You are giving your clients great results. You are feeling great about your work. You are taking good care of them. They’re feeling very good about their work with you. It is a win, win, win all the way around.

Before we get started, let’s talk a little bit about what doesn’t work. What doesn’t work in marketing and enrollment is trial and error. When I did that $8,000 direct mail campaign, I just took it on somebody’s advice. I just tried it out. There were no guarantees. It flopped. It was an expensive lesson.

I tell you, I’m really glad I did it because it gives me a great story. It gives me a great example of what not to do. I’ve done a lot of trial and error in my life. I’m a bit of a risk taker. I love taking risks and say, “Gee, how is this going to work out?” I’m a bit more of a risk taker than most people are or should be. That helps me learn. It helps me pass on what I’ve learned. It can work for me. I wouldn’t recommend it for you necessarily. I’d much rather have you take the proven strategies that I can share with you rather than just try stuff out. Trial and error does not work.

The golden rule does not work. The golden rule most people know, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, which is a great rule. It really civilizes us. Don’t walk around
doing something to other people that you wouldn’t want them to do to you. It’s a wonderful rule.

However, when it comes to marketing and being a private practice professional, what the golden rule often means is treat your clients and your prospects as you would want to be treated. In other words, treat them as if they were a version of you.

The golden rule really falls short in some ways, for example, gift giving. If you’re giving a gift using the golden rule “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”, you’re going to give a gift that you would want to receive. That you think is cool, that you’re excited about. That doesn’t work. It’s not going to make somebody else happy that you give them a gift that you really love. In your marketing, are you going to be effective at reaching people and being of service to them when you’re making it all about you? This is what sounds good to you. The golden rule falls short in marketing and enrollment.

What doesn’t work is being the lone ranger. As a coach, what I’ve learned is that we are social beings. We can do anything with enough support. Think about it, with enough support you can climb the Empire State Building. You can go to the moon. You can do things that you didn’t even think was possible with enough support. Without any support, you’re going to struggle, guaranteed. What doesn’t work is being a lone ranger.

Also what doesn’t work is the shotgun. The shotgun is just putting stuff out there to reach as many people as possible. What I’ve discovered is that most effective marketing is targeted marketing because you are trying to reach a particular audience. Sending out a press release for example, even something like being on TV or radio or having a feature article in the newspaper. If it’s not directed at a particular target audience about a particular specific thing, it’s too broad. It’s too wide. It’s not going to work.

What also doesn’t work is trying to please everybody. I’ve talked to a lot of professionals about this that they don’t want to leave anybody out. Trying to please everybody, trying to reach everybody with the shotgun approach, trying to please everybody and make everybody happy does not work. We are very, very good at helping certain kinds of people do certain kinds of things. We are not very good at helping everybody do everything. It doesn’t work if we try.

What also doesn’t work is avoidance and procrastination. Be honest, in your everyday life and in your work, when you work with clients you probably get a lot of juice from working with them. When you’re not working with clients, what are you doing? What you should be doing is building your business. Marketing, enrolling and doing things that will bring more traffic to you and more prospects and more clients to you.

How much of your time are you avoiding doing that? How much of your time do you know what you should be doing to build your business and you’re procrastinating doing it? It just doesn’t work.
I want you to imagine, actually I want you to do this. I want you to put your hands out in front of you and start with them being level. I want you to raise ... I’m doing this too. I want you to raise your left hand high and lower your right hand low. The right hand represents how many clients you have. When you have a low amount of clients, a few clients, look at your left hand. That’s how much time you should be spending marketing and building your business.

I want you to even out your hands and then reverse them. The right hand is high and the left hand is low. The right hand represents, you got a lot of clients now. You have a full calendar. Look at your left hand, you don’t have to do as much marketing and business building as when you didn’t have as many clients. You don’t even have the time to do all that. However, you still have to keep your marketing and your business building going. You don’t have to spend all your time doing it.

Notice that we’re not accounting for procrastination and avoidance. Surfing the internet or wasting your time on Facebook, things like that. Definitely I recommend that you, if you are self-employed that you have a work day and a work week, that you have certain hours that you start and that you end. During those hours you are absolutely focused on your business. If you don’t and then you end up avoiding and procrastinating, it doesn’t work to build a successful private practice.

Lastly, what doesn’t work is suppressing your inner entrepreneur. I tell you, as a therapist, I had no idea I had an inner entrepreneur. I resisted marketing. I burned out working with managed care clients at a fraction of my hourly rate.

When I discovered coaching, I discovered my inner entrepreneur. I became creative. Part of it was necessary because as a therapist I knew I could help people in pain. They were motivated to work with me because they were in pain. The value proposition was I could take their pain away. They’re motivated by pain. That was very, very easy formula for me to get clients.

As a coach I had no idea how to market coaching when I started out. How do you market to people that are not in pain? I became creative. I became more of an entrepreneur. I’m going to share those strategies with you today because I think this works very, very well for therapists as well as coaches as well as any helping professional that wants to get clients and help people because this is how we should be doing it. This is the present and the future.

The past is insurance will pay for it. The past is I messed up my life. I’m in pain. I need help as a last resort. That’s the past. The future is fulfillment, happiness. It’s going after what you really want. It’s living a full life. That’s a bit about what doesn’t work.

Let’s move on to what does work. What does work are carefully selected strategies and tactics. The direct mail campaign, a flop, doesn’t work. What does work? How do you find out what does work for you? One recommendation would be to talk to people that are in your industry that are very successful doing exactly what it is you want to do. I made the mistake of
contacting a marketing consultant that was not in my industry although he convinced himself and me that he could help me. Maybe he wanted the money or whatever.

What I learned the hard way is to consult with people who are very successful in your industry, in your specialty, doing exactly what it is you want to do. Don’t listen to anybody that doesn’t have that direct experience because they might be successful doing what they do, it’s not necessarily going to help you. What does work is carefully selecting strategies and tactics for your industry, for your kind of clients, for your kind of practice.

Next, what does work is the platinum rule. The platinum rule is a step above the golden rule. The platinum rule says, “Do unto others as they want to be done to.” If you’re going to give somebody a gift, you give them something that they would want to receive that would make them really, really happy. If you’re going to market something, market something that you know that people really want. It’s in response to a need that they have, that you’ve asked them about, that they’ve told you about.

Don’t just make something up off the top of your head and have it sound and look good to you. It’s whatever you put out, you have tested it and you try to please and reach the people that you want to help. That is the platinum rule. You’re focusing on them not you.

What does work is to get support, not being a lone ranger. Getting a coach, getting a consultant, hiring people that are in your industry that have experience and a successful track record doing what it is you want to do. Don’t do this alone.

What also works is having a laser focus on your goal. If you want to build a successful business helping people, what do you want that to look like? Who do you want to help? What do you want your business to look like and keeping really focused on that. Part of that focus is important to realize that there’s going to be a lot of ideas and opportunities that will come along that could take you off that focus. It’s like the kid in the candy store, I want to do this. I want to do that. I don’t want to leave anybody out. I don’t want to not do everything. I want to do everything. It’s impossible to do everything well.

To be successful, you must be laser focused on your goal, on what it is you want to do and accomplish and build. That doesn’t have to be the only thing you do. You can build upon that, build upon that and build upon that. Being laser focused. I’ve just seen too many people just be scattered and just say yes to too many things- be laser focused.

What does work is delivering results and transformation. When you think about your services, I do not want you to think about “Okay I’m going to do acupuncture. I’m going to do coaching. I’m going to give a massage. I’m going to do psychotherapy.” That is the service. That’s what you might be trained to do. That’s what you might be passionate about. I don’t want you to think about that. I want you to think about the results that you deliver and the transformation that you provide.
People come to you. They will come to you. They will hire you. They will pay you lots of money for results. How much is acupuncture worth at an hourly rate or a per needle placement rate? It’s worth X amount. How much would solving the problem be worth that you go to acupuncture for? That would be worth a lot more.

Coaching or psychotherapy, how much is an hour of coaching or psychotherapy worth? It’s worth X amount. What would the result be worth? Saving the marriage or getting job, curing the depression or living your best life or accomplishing your biggest goal. What would that be worth? That would be worth a lot more.

Focus on the results and transformation that you deliver, do not focus on the service. Your service is not worth as much as the results and transformation that you deliver. Focus on that, focus on getting the results, focus on talking about the results, focus on charging for the results.

Along those lines, embrace your inner entrepreneur because here is the deal, you might think you are in business to help people. That might be true, but the purpose of all business is to make money. You might have every pore in your body screaming in resistance to this idea. Think about it. The purpose of business, take a look at business all over the world, is to make money. That’s a good thing because money is an exchange of value.

I pay money for something I get something of value back. Money is the currency. It is the measurement. It is, the primary purpose of a business is to make money. If you are making money it means you are delivering positive value. If you are not making money, it means you’re not delivering much. It’s not sustainable.

We really, really need to overcome our resistance and realize we are in business to make money. That’s a good thing because it’s an exchange of value. When you embrace your inner entrepreneur, when you get creative and when you make it okay and even desirable to make money doing what you do, it really opens the door to success.

Along those lines, here are some reasons to charge significant fees for your services. I really want to help you feel good about charging a lot. As we’ve already mentioned, the first is results. You can and should charge for the results that you help your clients achieve. They are worth way more than your time on an hourly basis.

Next is selectivity. You charge significant fees for your services by being selective about who you help and what you help them accomplish. You want to be in your zone. You want to work with people that you want to work with, doing something you’re really good at, that you deserve to be paid a lot of money for. You want to be selective. When you’re not selective and you try to help everybody do anything, you’re not very good at any of it. You’ll be very, very good. You’ll be an expert. You’ll be a magician at helping certain people achieve a certain thing. Be selective. You can charge a lot for it.
Sustainability is a reason to charge significant fees for your services. You must make a living. You must have a sustainable business and business model to make a living. Without that, if you quit your private practice and get a job because you can’t get high paying clients, you can’t make a living out of it, the world is less for it.

We need you. If you feel a calling, there’s a reason for that. You are on a mission. You’re needed to make a difference in the world. If you can’t get clients and make a living out of it, that is not sustainable. Please, please, please charge significant fees for your services just so that you can stay in the business of helping people so that you can make a difference in the world that you were called to make.

Next is reciprocity. I talked about how money is an exchange of value. When you deliver great service and great results, you deserve to get paid significantly for it. That’s a reciprocal relationship. It feels good. It feels equal. It feels reciprocal.

If you charge a little bit and you deliver outrageous, wonderful results that is unequal. That is not reciprocal. You want your client to feel very, very good about you and very, very good about themselves. They’ll feel good about you if they get their results from working with you. They’ll feel very, very good about themselves for making the wise decision to work with you and to pay you for those results.

They’ll feel guilty about it if they feel like they’ve ripped you off. You transformed their life and they only paid you 50 bucks. No, they might feel like they got a deal. No, they don’t feel good about that. The law of reciprocity is very, very important in that things need to be equal between people. When you are helpful to somebody then they want to pay you. They want to compensate you. That is a reason to charge significant fees for your services because you do want to charge in correlation to the results of the transformation or the impact that your services have.

Next, a reason for charging significant fees is to fund community service. We want to make a difference in the world. We want to help. We would just love to be able to give our services away. We can’t do that because we are in business. We are in business to make money. You know what? We can use that money to fund community services, to go into schools, to give away services, to donate. We can make a much bigger difference in the world by being financially successful than we can by struggling. We can make a much larger difference in the world by being financially successful.

Those are some reasons to charge significant fees for your services. I want to share this with you just to get you a little hyped up and say, “Yes I want to charge a lot. Yes, I want to charge as much as I possibly can” as opposed to “I don’t feel good about it. I don’t know enough. My clients can’t afford to pay what I’d really like to make.” These are very, very important reasons to charge significant fees.
Here’s something I’d like you to keep in mind. The more people you help, the more money you make. The more people you help the more money you make. The caveat here is you must leverage it. You must charge enough for helping them. If you don’t, you can help a million people in the world and be poor and not even be able to make a living. The more people you help the more money you make. You have to leverage it. You have to charge enough for it.

The other side of it is the more money you make; the more people you can help. Money is a good thing. I’m really trying to chip away at your resistance here, whatever attitudes are getting in the way of charging significant fees and getting paid what you’re worth. The more money you make, the more people you can help. Hopefully you’d want to be very, very, very financially successful so that you can help a lot more people.

Along the lines of making more money, I would like to share with you my top five strategies to maximize your private practice income. You are in business. You are in the business of helping people. These are five things that nobody ever told me, that I had to learn the hard way that there was no training program for. I feel really, really good about passing this along. If you are in the business of helping people, you have a private practice. You get clients and help those clients.

Here are five things that you must do: First, give yourself a raise every year. Costs go up every year, the cost of living, prices go up every year. The cost of gasoline, of food and of housing goes up all around you. You need to raise your rates as well. Your prospects and your clients will absolutely understand. This is an economy. This is a business. They will not give you a hard time or resist it. They will understand. I promise you. Give yourself a raise every year. I’ve seen too many practitioners set their fee when they started out. They never raised it. 10 years later, they are still charging the same fee. Please give yourself a raise every year.

Step one to doing this is choose an anniversary date for your practice. It could be your birthday. It could be January 1st. It could be whatever day you choose. Put it on your calendar and celebrate that day because really you being in business for yourself and making a positive difference in the world is a wonderful thing. Your practice is a wonderful thing, celebrate it, have an anniversary date and celebrate it.

Step two is determine your new rate. It almost doesn’t matter to me how much you increase your fees by. As long as you have the regular discipline of doing so, even $5 is better than nothing. This is so important. It might sound like a simple thing. Most people don’t do it. They find themselves years and years later undercharging. This is really important. Choose your new rate on your anniversary date.

Modify your paperwork, whatever contracts and agreements and notifications you have for prospective clients. Modify your paperwork to reflect your new rate. Notify your current clients. Give them 30 days’ notice.
What I’ve seen a lot is practitioners that raise their rate for new clients and they charge their current clients the old rate. Don’t do that. The reason is that you are training your old clients to expect that they will always pay that rate. Some of our clients work with us for years. 10 years later, you’re charging Sam $50 an hour. You’re charging your new clients $100. There’s something very wrong and unbalanced about that. Please raise your rate for your current clients as well.

The big fear that I’ve heard over and over again is that your current clients will drop, that they will stop seeing you if you raise your rate on them. Over and over again I’ve seen that as absolutely not true. If they’re getting benefit and value from working with you, they will not bat an eyelash. They will expect it because prices go up all the way around them. It’s not a surprise. It’s not a new thing.

If you have money issues though, then you make a big deal about it and they’ll make a big deal about it. If you resolve your money issues, if you realize you’re in the business to make money and that you need to raise your rates because your costs go up as well, it’s a normal okay thing, your clients will feel like it’s normal and okay as well. Notify your current clients 30 days in advance and increase your rate to them. Do not give in to temptation to charge them the old rate.

Step five, do it and never look back. This one thing, giving yourself a raise every year, this one thing is worth the price of admission, nobody ever told me about this. You will not see or hear this anywhere. This is worth the price of admission. If you do nothing else please just do this.

Strategy number two private pay only. I have seen a lot of practitioners dream of getting grants or signing up with insurance companies and getting clients and getting paid that way or getting consulting contracts. All of these alternatives put you and your business at risk because whenever you accept money from a third party, whether it’s a grant from the government or it’s a consulting contract from a company or it’s insurance companies, you’re putting yourself and your business at risk because, number one, you become dependent upon that money but it’s not going to be there forever, guaranteed.

Number two; you are not going to be able to choose your clients and to stay in your passion about who you want to help and how you want to help them. The way to have a very successful private practice and to be fulfilled in your business is helping who you want to help in the way that you are best able to help them.

Having a leash on you and having an employer or having somebody else pay the bills is not the way to stay in your zone of doing your best work. It is not going to fulfill you. You do it only because you feel like you have to do it to survive or because you’d rather not market. Hopefully what I’m going to share with you today will really help you overcome that hump. Strategy number two private pay only. This means working with your clients and having them pay you directly out of their pocket, cash, check or credit card.
How can you do that? One strategy is to make sure you have a merchant account and accept credit cards. People are very willing to put it on their credit card. It’s a little, very few people carry around enough cash to pay you and writing a check is almost passe nowadays. To have a successful private practice and to maximize your private practice income, you must have a merchant account. Go ahead and do that.

PayPal is a great way to get started. It’s just a way to get started. You continue using PayPal. PayPal is great in a lot of ways. Recurring billing is one way that PayPal really, really shines. You must have a merchant account if you want to have a successful private practice, be able to accept all credit cards.

Also to maximize your private practice income bill by the month or the program not by the session. In my private practice in the early days I would have a lot of what I call “one session wonders.” People would be in pain. They would call me. They would make an appointment with me. We would meet for the first time. I would do some of my best work. I would pull out all the stops. I would be as helpful as I possibly could. They would walk away happy and say, “Oh my gosh, thank you Mr. Steele. Thank you so much. You’ve really helped us.” They never came back. I call them “one session wonders.”

I learned early on that billing by the session doesn’t work because change occurs over time. We are in private practice. We want to help people achieve a certain result, a certain transformation. That occurs over time not in one session. We want to have a program that has multiple sessions, weeks and months. We want to have our clients decide to sign up for our program not to work with us on a session by session basis.

We do not want each session to be a buying decision. Can I afford it this week? Do I want to pay for it this week? We don’t want our clients even asking themselves those questions. We want automatic billing, by the month. We want them to sign up for a program or to pay for the program preferably in advance or in monthly installments not by the session.

Set up recurring billing. As I mentioned PayPal is great with this. There is in the free version of PayPal with a subscription feature. For $19 a month (currently anyway) PayPal has a recurring billing feature that works really, really well. I highly recommend it. Set up your recurring billing on PayPal. You can also do that with some credit card merchant account providers.

Strategy number three of our top five strategies to maximize your private practice income is no sliding scale or discounts. Never negotiate your fees ever, ever, ever. There are very few things that I am absolute about. I do recognize the world is not black and white. The world is a lot of grey out there. This is one of those things I am absolutely black and white about, I am absolute never negotiate your fees, never provide discounts upon request.

It’s one thing to provide a discount say, “Hey, my program cost this. I’ll give you $500 discount for signing up today or for paying for the whole thing in advance.” There are times to provide discounts, sure, but not upon request. Don’t negotiate your fees. Don’t have a sliding scale, full
fee all the time, always. The minute you start having the conversation to discount your fees is the time that you are actually not only hurting yourself, you are interfering with this prospective client getting the benefit of what you can deliver. We’ll get into that a little bit more. Strategy number three is full fee all the time, no sliding scale or discounts.

Strategy number four, maximizing of private practice income is groups. The Million Dollar Private Practice book presents a model of private practice that is based on one to many. You’re only one person. You only have so many slots in your calendar for clients. Once you fill those calendar slots, that’s it. You can only make as much income as that.

The way to leverage that, the way to make more income and the way to serve even more people is through various group alternatives. This means classes, workshops, group coaching or counseling, retreats, seminars. Expand from one-to-one to groups. That is the way to maximize your private practice income.

Strategy number five is multiple revenue streams. As private practice professionals, we charge for our services. That’s only one way we can make money. We can make money other ways. We can make a difference and help people other ways.

Diversifying your services, other sources of revenues, other private practice professional include having a membership program. Wouldn’t it be cool that instead of having a client that works with you for a certain number of sessions or signs up for one program, that you have a membership program and they will be a member of it for years? You can continue delivering value to them for years. When they decide to drop, okay that’s fine. You have a whole cohort of people. You have a whole group of people in this membership program that you can be of service to for years.

One way to think about it is that when you become my client, you are automatically enrolled in my membership program. One example of how it can work is that you have an annual workshop or retreat for your members. It is free to your members. This can be where you deliver great value. You have a reunion. You’re checking in and reconnecting with people that you haven’t seen for a while. You’re also getting new clients and attracting new business. A membership program can be a lot of fun. You’re building a community around your practice and the people that you serve. It’s really, really cool. I highly recommend it.

Next is products. Most of us in our work with our clients, we help them solve problems. We have ideas. We have brilliance that comes up. Have you ever worked with a client and suggested an intervention or an idea and said to yourself, “That was cool. That was brilliant. Where did that come from?” It’s those moments of brilliance that you need to capture.

At Relationship Coaching Institute, one of our most popular products is the Communication Map. The Communication Map I developed years ago in my practice with couples out of necessity. I needed something that they could use right away, something I could teach them
right away. They did not have weeks and weeks for communication training. They needed an intervention right away. I really could find nothing that was adequate to the task.

I ended up developing this myself in bits and pieces with these little flashes of brilliance as I was dealing with these arguing couples. That evolved into the communication map that is now our most popular product, very, very affordable. In fact you can get the tutorial for free at http://www.communicationmaptutorial.com. It’s my gift to the world. It came out of my work with my clients. It came out of these little flashes of brilliance.

When you think about it, when you work with your clients, if you have particular specialty, you tend to deal with the same things that come up over and over again. You can easily turn that into a system if you have a predictable number of problems or steps. You have some strategies and tactics that you have tested and worked with your clients that work for you. That can be your program. You can package that into a product.

Rather than treating each client as unique, conducting your service with them and doing good work with them, look at the big picture. Look at all the clients you’ve worked with and all your experience with them. If you were to pull it together into a program or a package, if you were to systemize what you do, what would that look like? You can develop a product around that, really, really cool. We all can do this.

I’m so in awe of the brilliance of helping professionals. I’m pretty brilliant when it comes to relationships because it’s my passion. I live and breathe it every day. There are practitioners that are passionate about health and wellness, about yoga, you name it. They are brilliant. They live and breathe this every day. You are brilliant. You live and breathe something every day; package that, evolve it to the next level. You are absolutely capable of that.

Packages are a great way to diversity your services. You can create packages such as silver, gold, platinum, such as beginning, intermediate, advanced. When you provide people a choice of packages, the people that really want everything you’ve got and the best you’ve got, they’ll go for the top package. The people that want to put their toe in the water, they’ll go for the bottom package. Most people go for the middle package. Provide them some choices in terms of packages and you will generate more sales and help more people that way than if you just provide your services one way.

There’s joint ventures. You can diversity your services by partnering with complimentary professionals. These are people that serve your audience but do it in a different way. An obvious example would be when I was working with couples on the verge of divorce, I would partner with mediators. I didn’t want to get into the nitty-gritty of their divorce details or possible custody details.

I wanted to focus on their relationship and the possible healing of it. If they were going to get a divorce, to have it be as friendly as possible and to keep the family functioning. I couldn’t do that if I was going to get into the nitty-gritty details of their situation. I would have a mediator. I
would want them to be talking about that kind of thing outside of therapy. There are many, many kinds of professionals that work with your client population that you can partner with. Together you will be far more powerful, far more effective for your target audience than you by yourself.

That is my top five strategies to maximize your private practice income. That is information that you will not get anywhere else. I've never seen anywhere else. If you are in the business of helping people as a private practice professional, I highly recommend that you give yourself a raise every year, that you focus on private pay only, getting paid directly from your clients, cash, check or credit card, no sliding scale or discounts, full fee that you find ways to serve your clients in groups and that you implement multiple revenue streams.

Next topic in how to get clients or get paid what you’re worth is how much should I charge? I get this question all the time, about whether it’s a program or it’s just coaching or people want to know, how much should I charge?

Here are some ideas and guidelines for deciding how much should you charge; first, whatever your comfortable level is, double it. Remember the empathic mentality that you really feel for your clients and it’s hard for you to charge something that would be uncomfortable for you to pay. That’s all about you. That’s all about your money issues. Whatever your comfort level is, go ahead and double it. If you would be comfortable paying $75 an hour, if you look at your checkbook and you’d be paying somebody $75 an hour for your service, double it, charge 150. I’m serious.

Number two, stretch your clients. Ideally, your clients would stretch and pay you a bit more than they’re comfortable with. Why? Because then they are invested and they are greatly increasing the odds that they will get the benefit of working with you because they are invested. They are committed. When you think about it, the things that you pay a bit more than you’re comfortable with, you make sure you get the value from. Stretch your clients, charge just a bit more than they’re comfortable with. Make them stretch to pay you and they will get much more benefit from working with you. It really is a win-win that way.

Number three, look at your competition and charge more. Please don’t be uncomfortable doing this because if people do shop around and they find that you’re charging more than the other people in your field, it’s not that they’re going to ignore you and go for the cheaper one. They’re going to look at you and say, “Wow, you must be good.” That’s the clients you want to work with, the client that want the value. The client that is willing to invest in it. Not the clients that are going to shop around and hire the discount practitioner.

Go ahead and one-up your competition, charge more than your competition. Seriously, most practitioners that I’ve talked to about this, they’re scared to death of it, really, honestly, take a look around and charge more than everybody else even if you don’t feel like you’re worth it or you’re worthy of it. If you get the results, you are worth it and worthy of it.
That is the next point is charge for results. If you are charging for the results that you deliver, you can charge a lot more than on a per hour basis. If you are a coach for singles and you help people find the love of your life and you’ve had 10 clients and you have helped eight clients find the love of their life in the past year. Two are still looking but eight have found the love of their life, that’s an 80% success rate. That’s great.

What’s it worth for somebody who is single and has been struggling with being single for years and just feels like they’re at risk of being alone for the rest of their lives? What is it worth to them to find the love of their life? It’s worth a lot. It’s worth mortgaging their house, selling their car. What’s it worth to have the life and the relationship that you really want? It is worth a lot, charge for the results that you deliver.

Please remember to sell programs not sessions. Don’t charge by the session. Don’t focus your client on a per hourly fee for your work, focus them on your program, on the results and transformation that the program delivers. Do not talk about sessions. Do not talk about how many sessions per week or per month, do not charge by the session. Focus on programs.

That is some ideas on deciding how much you should charge. It would make me very, very happy if you set your rates at a level much higher than what you are comfortable with.

Next topic on how to get clients and get paid what you’re worth is promoting client loyalty and longevity. This is important because once you get a client you want to keep that client. You want to be of service to that client. You want a long-term relationship with that client. It is a lot easier to serve your existing clients over time and generate income from them than it is to generate new clients all the time.

Certainly you will market and generate new clients. You don’t want to have a revolving door. You don’t want to have what we call “churn.” You want to build your business. You build your business by keeping the clients that you have and bringing new clients in the door, doing both of those things. This is one of the aspects that most practitioners ignore. Most practitioners are focused on helping their clients which is good and getting new clients which is good. They are not focused on promoting longevity and loyalty. There are some very, very simple things you can do to do that. Here we go; one is continually measure and prove the value and benefits of working with you. If people are getting tangible value, if they really get the value, then they will be happy with your service. If they’re getting value but they’re not even aware of the value because it’s intangible, it’s not even measured, they won’t value it.

How do you do that? Option one is simply tracking the goals. They came to you with a problem, they came to you with a goal, what were they? Go ahead and track them. Check in on them. It’s as simple as asking, “Hey, how are we doing with X? How are you feeling about X?” Spending some time talking about the reason they came in and the progress that they’re making about it. It’s as simple as that, doing that on a regular basis.
Maybe it’s once a month. Maybe it’s every session. Doing it in writing is even more effective. If you do that in writing, you can easily create option two which is a checklist. Remember earlier we were talking about most of us we have a population of clients we are working with. We have a particular specialty. We typically have common patterns that we see and common interventions that we use.

Chances are you can create a checklist pretty easily off the top of your head for your client population. The things that they encounter, the solutions that are common with them, the things that they might need to do to be successful, the things that they might need to watch out for. You can create and refine a checklist and then use that checklist to keep track of their goals and their progress. That is a way of making it very, very tangible and very, very concrete.

A step above that, option three is to turn your checklist into an assessment. This is cool. You can create an assessment for your own business, for your own client population by simply taking your checklist. Let’s say there’s a checklist item. Let’s say the item is, let’s say somebody wants to achieve financial security. They’re working with you to do that. Their goal is to save 1% of their income per month. You might have a number of items under that. Save 1% of my income per month, you might have a range like full, partial or not at all. That’s an example of a three part range.

You might have a scale of one to five or zero to 10. For every item on your checklist, you can create a scale of some kind or a multiple choice. That becomes your assessment. At the end of your assessment you have some questions like what are your top five strengths, top five weaknesses, top five goals? What do you most want to work on? Where do you want to start? You can do this; you can just create it on your own for your particular client’s population.

I recommend that you use your assessment as your intake tool. You do that with your clients when they first start working with you. You do that to help them formulate the goals of working with you. You also do that, we administer the assessment. We call it pre-post. I’m going to give you the assessment before we start working together. I’m going to give it to you again say a month or two or three months later. I’m going to give it to you again three to six months after that, pre-post.

It is amazing when you do a pre-post and you compare the results. When we work with our clients on an ongoing basis it’s really hard to see the progress. It’s really hard to even know what the progress is. It’s hard to see the forest for the trees. When you do an assessment on a pre-post basis and you compare the results, it is amazing how far they came in a fairly short amount of time. It really makes it concrete and tangible. Your clients become appreciative and grateful and really value your services because they really get it in a tangible, concrete way.

That is the best way to promote loyalty or longevity is if you can prove your value, prove the progress that you’re making with them. That is gold, that by itself ladies and gentleman is worth the price of admission as well. Very few practitioners do it, this is the best way to promote client loyalty and longevity and build a very, very successful business.
Next topic is five questions that will get you hired. We’re going to get into enrollment right now.

Five questions that will get you hired. This is in your client getting bonus package. This is the enrollment conversation by the way. When you talk with a prospective client, any time you are talking with a prospective client, I call that the enrollment conversation. It can be with somebody in line at Starbucks. It can be with somebody who makes an appointment that is considering hiring you.

It really doesn’t matter if they are a candidate for your services. You are a helping professional. You want to be of service. You focus on these five questions: The first question is very, very simple, what do you want? In coaching this is the primary question. With any helping professional, our clients come to us because they want something. They need something. They are having a problem that they want solved of some kind. They have a particular result in mind that they want.

We really need to focus on that. We really need to get them to speak to that. Ask them in various ways, what do you want? What would that look like when you get it? What’s your vision of that? How would your life be different once you achieve that? You can ask them in a variety of ways. The topic of conversation is what do you want? Get them to speak to that.

What I want you to do when you’re having this conversation with them is to ask them questions, listen and get them talking about what they want to the point that they get excited. You want an emotional response. That is the key to enrollment is getting the emotional response. It’s not about the head. It’s not about solving the problem up here in your head. It’s about the emotional response of oh I really want this, getting them in touch with that at an emotional level. Just ask questions, get them talking about it until you can see that emotional response. That is the first question. That’s the first step; what do you want?

Second, it’s what’s getting in your way? There’s a number of ways to ask this. There’s a number of things we want them to talk about. We want to talk about their challenges, their obstacles, what they tried before that didn’t work. This question is it can be literal. You can ask that, “What’s getting in your way?” Also what we really want to get out, what we really want to know is what have you tried that didn’t work? What are your challenges? What are your obstacles?

This helps them get in touch with their pain, the times that they failed, the times that were hard, the times that they tried something and it didn’t work. It was frustrating. The first question helps them get in touch with their excitement. The second question helps them get in touch with their pain. Again, keep on talking and asking questions until you get an emotional response. You can see, hear and feel that they are in touch with their pain. You stimulated their desire. You stimulated their pain.
The third question is, “I have a program perfect for people just like you who want X”, whatever they’re talking about, “Would you like to hear about it?” This is a very honoring question. Would you like to hear about it? Would you be interested in talking about my services or about my program? You’re not assuming, you’re just checking in with them. You’re getting permission.

The typical response especially if they have gotten in touch with their desire emotionally, they’re all excited. They got in touch with their pain emotionally and they’re aware of how frustrating it’s been, what they tried that didn’t work. When you ask them would you like to hear about a solution? The answer is almost always yes. Because it’s almost always yes doesn’t mean you skip the question. You’re getting permission. You’re getting them to say yes. That’s an important part of enrollment. In many cases, this is the first yes, very, very, very important. You describe your program.

The fourth question is do you have any questions about this program? As an example of describing the program if you look in your client getting bonus package, there’s a little paragraph explanation of the conscious dating program. Let’s say we’re talking with the singles, talking about how they really want to find the love of their lives, how frustrating it’s been and how they hate dating.

“You know what? I have a program perfect for people just like you who want to find the love of their life that really hate dating. Would you like to hear about it?” “Yeah okay” “You know what? I have a program, I call it conscious dating. It helps you become absolutely clearly about who you are, what you want and exactly how to get what you want in your life and relationship.

I will help you develop a conscious dating plan. This plan has specific steps and strategies that have proven effective for singles just like you. I will personally support you to implement your conscious dating plan and help you have the confidence that you need to be the chooser saying no to what you don’t want. To find the love of your life and get what you really want, avoid dating traps, and finally, finally find the love of your life. Does that sound good to you?”

It’s a bit of a pitch. You know what? You don’t really have to memorize it. If you have a program, you have a way that you help people; just describe how you help them. Describe the benefits. Describe how it works. Describe, tell the story, a success story of some kind. “You know what? I had a client just like you who started this way. Here’s what we ended up doing and here is where she is now. Does that sound good to you?”

The fourth question is do you have any questions about this program? This is where whatever information your prospect needs to make a decision will come out. Often the first question is how much is this program? Because you haven’t even really talked about price. Or what’s your success rate or any of those other kinds of things. This is a really good thing because whatever they ask at this point is what they need to make a decision.
Here is a secret of enrollment, a very important secret of client enrollment. The most important purpose of client enrollment, of the enrollment conversation is to help your prospect make a decision yes or no. That’s it. The hard part is when you have an enrollment conversation and there’s no decision. They say, “I’ll think about. I got to go talk to my wife. I’ll get back to you.” That’s not a decision.

What they really need to do is to make a decision that’s going to serve them. An either yes this is a fit, this will help them, or no it’s not a fit. It’s not for me. You want them to make a decision. You as the helping professional, if it’s not a fit, that’s okay. You can take no for an answer. You are not invested in enrolling everybody. I want you to stay focused on the most important outcome of the enrollment conversation is a decision, yes or no.

When you ask “do you have any questions about this program?” typically your prospect will be asking the questions they need to make a decision. You want to address those questions honestly and directly. There’s no real tricks here. It’s whatever information they need to make a decision. That’s the most important outcome of the enrollment conversation.

If they don’t make a decision and they walk away, the opportunity is lost. Certainly for you but mostly for them because how often do people come to a point where they’re just about to change their life. They can either say yes to that and step into it or turn around and say no to it and walk away, how often? For most of us, it’s pretty rare actually.

We as helping professionals, we deal with this every day. We live and breathe it. For most people, they don’t really even think about this all that much. Once every other year they’re frustrated enough about being single. They want to do something about it. Maybe once every other year, that means it’s like 24 months before the next time that they’re going to actually think about it, talk about it, do anything about it.

In that 24 months their lives won’t change at all. You don’t want that. You don’t want them to go back to their life the way it was. You want to do everything you can to support them to make a decision, yes or no. Yes it’s a fit. I want to do this or no, it’s not a fit. I’m going to do something else. The worst case is they make no decision. Their life doesn’t change.

Last question of the five questions that will get you hired is “Would you like to start next Tuesday?” I don’t mean that literally. I just mean this is more specific than when would you like to start? Propose a time and a day. I have an opening next week, Tuesday at 9:00 or Wednesday at 10:00 which is best for you? This is about closing.

Most practitioners when they attempt to enroll, they follow all these steps. They do everything right. They pull back from closing. They’re frustrated. They’re not getting clients. They’re just doing everything they can. They’re working very, very hard at it, spending long hours having strategy sessions with people. They’re not closing anything because it’s really hard to ask for money. It’s hard to ask for a commitment. It’s hard to be direct. This is the point at which you need to be direct and ask for a commitment.
After you’ve asked, “Do you have any questions about this program?” you have addressed their questions. Go ahead and ask them, “Would you like to start next week? I have an opening Tuesday at 9:00 or Wednesday at 10:00.” Go ahead and be direct. This is called closing. Most practitioners struggle with this. This is the key to getting hired.

I want to support you to address what is the biggest and most common reservation or objection that comes up in the enrollment conversation which is I can’t afford it. I want to first tell you that most of the time, this is not true. Most of the time, they are scared. It feels like a big risk to them to step into this and put themselves in your hands. It’s a lot of money to them. It’s understandable. The reality is that whatever they really wanted to do, they would come up with the money to do. If their car broke down, they would find a way to fix it. If they really wanted to go on vacation to Bahamas, they would. People generally have resources. They have options. They have a way of paying for things that they really want.

Here’s the secret. Here’s something that very few practitioners understand. Again, this by itself is worth the price of admission. I learned this the hard way over years. It’s painful to me. I want to share it with you right now because it’s a reality. People will pay much more for what they want than what they need. Think about that. People will pay much more for what they want than what they need.

When I was a therapist and my goal was to save marriages, they didn’t want to pay for that. They wouldn’t work with me if their insurance wouldn’t pay for it. They really needed it. They didn’t value it enough to pay significantly out of pocket for it. I don’t mean everybody. I mean a lot of people.

However, they’re completely willing to pay for what they want; to go into debt for it. To put it on their credit card, to ask for help paying for it. If it’s something they want, they’re all over it. If it’s something they need for some reason I don’t quite understand it, they don’t value it enough to really stretch to pay for it. It’s just the truth that I’ve come across over the years and I want to share with you.

It’s a painful truth because I really want to help people. I really want to meet their need. They are willing to pay much more for what they want than what they need. That’s why in our marketing and enrollment, we are focusing much, much more on helping them get what they want rather than focusing on what they need.

Two strategies for addressing “I can’t afford it” Acknowledging that they probably can if they wanted to. The first is sponsorship. Sponsorship means somebody else is paying for it. In the helping profession it’s quite common that the client isn’t actually the one paying. It could be their family, their parents. It could be their place of business. It can be their church. If they say, “I’d really like to but I just can’t afford it.” Have a conversation with them on who cares enough about them to help them hire you and help them sign up for this program and get this result? Chances are they have people that care about them.
Let’s take this person who is single. They’ve been single for 15 years since their divorce. How many people care enough about them, they would love to see them be happy and find another relationship? How many people would be willing to chip in and help them sign up for a program that would support them?

The biggest problem about sponsorship is not that the resource and support isn’t there, the biggest program is asking for it because we are in a culture, in the U.S. anyway that really resists asking for help. That becomes an area of coaching because remember the lone ranger, no one is successful alone. We can accomplish anything with enough support.

If they are not willing to ask for help from their network, if they’re not willing to seek sponsorship, that’s a bigger problem than just not being able to sign up for your program, that’s a problem in their entire life. They’re isolating themselves because they are not willing to let people know that they need help. They’re not willing to ask for help.

Sponsorship is almost guaranteed, that anybody that says, “Gee, I’d really like to but I can’t afford it.” they could sign up for your program through sponsorship. Through asking enough people for help whether it’s their church, their family or their friends or their place of business.

Also sponsorship does not have to mean begging. Sponsorship can also mean an exchange. You sponsor me in this program. I’ll help you with X. It can be more like a barter. Often people feel much better about that. They don’t feel good about begging. They do feel good about a fair exchange.

Nowadays there are websites that are designed to do this. Kickstarter.com is one you might be familiar with. Gofundme.com is another one. People are asking for sponsorship. They’re asking for money for certain things. They’re willing to provide something in exchange. This is something that you can suggest and something that you can coach your prospective client through to sign up for your program by getting sponsored.

Second of my two easy positive powerful strategies to address “I can’t afford it” is pro bono. This doesn’t mean that if they can’t afford it, you give away your services. What this does mean is you have a genuine pro bono practice where you have let’s say one or two slots in your practice that you leave open to free pro bono services.

The rule and guideline for pro bono services is it’s always time limited. It’s always 30 days or 60 days or 90 days something like that. It’s never forever. It is always for somebody who is in an urgent situation or in other words they really need it. It’s not for somebody that’s already gone through your program or worked with you in the past and they just need some fine tuning or just need some maintenance thing or just have the next problem to work with you on. It’s for somebody who is new to your practice who you really want to help and they really need you.

The third guideline about pro bono is that there’s an exchange of some kind, that they’re just not just receiving free services. There’s an exchange of some kind. Maybe it’s a testimonial or
endorsement or a referral. They’re working with you for free for 60 days. If they’re satisfied with your services, they will refer at least two friends to you.

The exchange could be that they do 10 hours of volunteer service at the local homeless shelter. You make them work for it. You don’t just give away your services. You do it on a limited basis. This is just for one or two slots in your practice. You have a contract to that effect.

Remember it’s time limited. It’s just for people that are new to your practice in an urgent or they really need you. It’s a good fit for what you do. There’s an exchange of some kind. Referrals, endorsement, testimonials or even volunteer community service or something like that.

The benefit of doing this is that you can share that you have pro bono slots in your practice. You can let your referral sources know about that. You end up getting a lot of referrals because if referring to you means that people are going to have to pay a lot of money, the referral source is going to be very judicious in making that referral. Is this a good candidate? Can this person afford it? Am I going to offend them? Am I going to make them feel bad about themselves by referring to this person?

If you have some pro bono slots in your practice, they’ll feel very good about it and say, “Hey, I’d like to refer you to Shirley Jones. She’s very, very good. If you can’t afford it, she does have a couple of pro bono slots. Maybe you could ask about that.” You end up getting a lot of referrals once people know that you have a couple of pro bono slots.

There’s another benefit. This one is my favorite. Please listen closely. If you have a couple of pro bono slots in your practice and somebody says, “Gee, I’d like to but I really can’t afford it.” Here’s what you can say, “I do have a couple of pro bono slots in my practice. They’re currently filled. Here, you can fill out this application. There is a small waiting list. I’d estimate that a slot might open up in five to six months.”

You’re not saying no, I’m not going to work with you if you can’t afford it. You’re not challenging them on it. You’re saying, “Yeah, I’m willing to work with you for free. However, there’s a waiting list. You’re going to have to wait for five or six months.” You have to fill out an application. It doesn’t have to be a big deal application. It could be a very simple application.

If somebody really wants to work with you, they really want the result and money is really not the issue it’s just about fear, what I’ve seen happen, this is just so beautiful. It’s now they have a choice- work with you for full fee now or apply for a pro bono slot that might open up in five or six months.

Remember that thing about people are more willing to pay for what they want than what they need? Typically what they want they want now. They don’t want it in six months. They want it now. I’ve seen so many people when presented this choice just go ahead and decide to hire you now because they don’t want to wait six months. This is a really, really, really powerful strategy
I’ve seen work really, really well over and over again. These are my two best strategies for addressing the biggest objection that you will get, the “I can’t afford it” one. They work very, very well.

Next, I want to share with you my absolute favorite strategy for getting a client any time you want. I want to tell you a story first. When I started as a relationship coach in San Jose California, Silicon Valley, I started with a weekly event for single as a marketing event. Those are the people that we marketed our class and our workshops to. That’s where we got our individual clients and group clients from. It worked really, really well.

I brought on a partner, cool guy, his name is Marvin Cohen. He was a corporate guy, became an executive coach and then became really passionate about relationships. He started hanging around my Friday night socials for singles. He’s married guy and I was suspicious of him for doing that. He finally approached me, introduced himself and why he was there. He was just really, really interested in what I was doing. I ended up bringing him on board as an associate.

Marvin had a sales background. Whenever we announced a class, in our office, we could fit 12 people for a class. Our goal was to fill each class. We would announce a class. We’d get signups for our next class, whatever slots were open, Marvin would then get on the phone. He wouldn’t stop until he filled those slots. It was so inspiring to me. I’ve never seen this, ever. I’m not from the corporate world. I’m not from a sales background.

Here’s a true salesman, somebody who’s passionate and cares and connects with people. He’s a networker, truly from a place of integrity and service. He would be contacting the people that come to our Friday night socials, that were on our mailing list. They opted in. They gave permission for us to contact them. There was a requirement for coming is that you give us your name, email and telephone number. He would always start with the people that he had personal conversations with.

This was very much of a networking event. We would meet people. We would talk about the situation and say, “You know what? We have a class coming up next month that’s perfect for you. Think about joining it.” We’d leave it at that. When the time came for the class, we would get back in touch with them, say, “Hey so and so, the class is starting. It’s perfect for you. This would really help you. Would you like to join?”

This is what Marvin would do. He would get on the phone. He would network until those slots were filled. It was inspiring to me. When I started Relationship Coaching Institute and I started conducting practice building programs for the graduates, because my goal was to help them get clients to have a successful business not just provide training. Training is necessary and important. Training is not going to go anywhere if you can’t get a client. It’s really, really important to me that my graduates get clients.

I put together a practice building program for them. At the end of the practice building program, I would give them my 24 hour challenge. This is totally, totally based on Marvin.
Here’s the deal, the people that you know, the prospects that you have, that you’ve talked with in the past, your friends, your family, your neighbors, your entire network, these are people that you can reach out to anytime you want if you wanted to.

If you have an open slot and you want to get a client, go ahead and organize these contacts. Put the very first person up to the top of the list that you would like to contact first. Person number two underneath that, person number three underneath that. Go ahead with the path of least resistance. Go ahead and the easiest people to talk to, the people that you’re most excited to talk to, the people most likely to answer the phone or email.

Go ahead and do what Marvin did. Go ahead, contact them and follow through until you get a client. What you do when you contact them is you don’t pitch them, you don’t say, “Hey, I have an open slot, you want to work with me?” No, not at all. You contact them to be of service.

If you’re a relationship coach how can you be of service? You can say, “Hey Jane, I’ve been thinking about you. I know you got divorced a while back. You’re probably starting to date again, how is your love life? Have you started dating?” You’re just being of service, you’re just asking questions. You’re just checking in with them on how they’re doing. You’re having a conversation. Pretty quickly that conversation can then evolve into the enrollment conversation.

The first question on the enrollment conversation is “What do you want?” You’re checking in with them about Where are you in your life? What do you want right now for your life? What’s your goal? What’s right in front of you? What’s getting in the way?

The idea of the 24 hour challenge is go ahead and sit down with intention. The intention of reaching out to the people that you know and checking in with them, connecting with them, being of service to them. When you do this, you will be amazed. You would think that people would hang up on you and be offended. “How dare you call me?” No, not at all. People are actually happy to hear from you especially if you are just calling to connect. That’s it. You are not attached. You are not expecting to get a client. You are not hoping this person will say yes to anything. You are just calling to connect. That’s a very, very important attitude to come from.

We as helping professionals, we actually love doing this. We love connection. We love being of service. This is just packaging it in a way to sit down with intention and reach out to the people
in your network and connect with them. Number one, you will almost always be positively received.

Number two, a concrete tangible result will almost always come from it. That tangible result is often either a referral or a client. A client meaning you’ve gotten them in touch with their goal and what they want and what’s going to get in the way. Now they decide you know what? This is really good timing for you to call me right now. Let’s get started next week.

Or a referral; this is just as good an outcome. I do want you to ask for referrals. There are many opportunities to ask for referrals when you’re working with a client. When you’re talking with the prospect, here, during the 24 hour challenge, go ahead and ask for their referral. You’ve been talking with somebody. You ask them, “Hey, you know what? Who do you know that would benefit from this program? Who else do you know that would benefit from what I do?” Go ahead and ask that question.

It is a wonderful outcome to reach out to people in your network, connect with them, be of service and then they end up referring somebody to you. That is one of the best business building efforts you can do. It cost nothing. If your calendar is empty or you have empty slots in your calendar, this is one of the easiest and best things you can do.

What Marvin taught me is when you sit down with intention, you will get results. Marvin filled every single class. He didn’t do it by being some slick sales person. He did it by sitting down with intention, reaching out to people and being of service. I highly, highly recommend you do this. It is my best strategy for getting a client any time you want. It really, really works. I’ve proven this with the graduates of my practice building programs for the past 16 years. I guarantee you this will work.

Next topic, we’re reaching the end of the road here, five steps for attracting high paying clients excited to work with you. Number one, become an expert. This is actually a lot easier than it sounds. You have training. You have experience. What does it take to be an expert? First, you have to choose something to become expert in. For example, when I became a relationship coach, I had no idea how to market that. I got the brilliant idea that, “Hey, singles become couples. Maybe I should start with them.” I’ve never worked with singles before. I had no idea how to work with singles.

I went through a journey in the course of three or four months in which I became an expert in what it was like to be single in Silicon Valley. How I could help them. Becoming an expert simply can be done. If you already have the training and experience of working with clients, you can decide to become an expert in anything.

You can become an expert in working with sexless marriages. You can become an expert in working with erectile dysfunction. You can become an expert in anything simply with intention, study and research. That’s really the first step. If you want to attract high paying clients, you
have to be an expert. They have to perceive you as an expert. It has to be genuine. It is actually not hard to do.

Step two is choose a specialty and a niche. A specialty is an areas focus for your business. This is like I’m going to work with men or I’m going to work with women who have never been married. That’s a specialty. A niche is a particular group of people. You have your specialty which is an area focused for your business. Your niche is the particular group of people for your marketing and your services. They go together.

If you’re going to focus on never married engineers in Silicon Valley, that is your niche. That’s the particular group of people that you know where to find them, you know who they are. Your specialty is I’m going to help them find the love of their life. Choose a specialty and a niche.

If you want to attract high paying clients, you cannot be a generalist. You cannot just work with anybody doing everything because people hire specialists when they have a specialized goal and a problem. You can command much higher fees as a specialist than you can as a generalist. That is just the fact.

A lot of practitioners resist this. The truth is that you can have more than one specialty. You can have more than one niche. This doesn’t have to be all that you do. In terms of your marketing and in terms of your enrollment, you need to market a particular thing to a particular group of people. You need to be expert in that. You can command higher fees.

Step three is put together a program around that specialty or that niche. If you are going to help never married engineers in Silicon Valley find the love of their love, put together a program for those folks. Chances are if you have some experience working with them, you already have all the information you need to put together the program. What are the common needs and obstacles that come up to them? What are the common steps that they take? You can also do some research and put together your program. You can have a pilot program.

What you first come up with is not going to be the finished, final version. It’s going to be the thing that you launch. It’s going to be the thing that you try. For me, this is so cool and so exciting that you can create a program out of thin air. The program wasn’t there before, boom, you’ve created a program. The important part is that then you test it and refine it so that it’s effective and gets results.

A program that you make up off the top of your head, if it doesn’t get results, you are not doing people a service. Go ahead and put together a program, feel free to just make it up given your professional experience and your training, do research. Make it as high quality program as you possibly can. Also test and re-plan it over time. That will be gold because not only will that be what you make a living on. That’s also something that you can package and you can sell, you can license. It can be your legacy. It can live far beyond you.
When I initially started working with singles in Silicon Valley, all those years ago, that program became the conscious dating program which became the conscious dating book, which became the conscious dating app, conscious dating workshops and classes and groups and coaching and seminars. It’s on and on.

Conscious dating is going to live far beyond me. I really love that. That we can put together a program that lives far beyond us, that makes a bigger difference in the world. You can do this. If you’re an expert and you chose a specialty and niche, you can put together a program for the people in your niche.

Step four is to be of service. Remember the 24 hour challenge, you’re contacting people, you’re talking with them just to be of service, “Hey, how are you doing? I was thinking about you and thought I’d check up on you.” Of course, I’m a relationship guy. I would want to have a relationship conversation. I am not going to be talking about how their garden is going. I would be talking about how their love life is going. Be of service, reach out to people and be of service.

If you are passionate about this, if you feel called to do this, if this is important to you, it is fulfilling to you just to be of service and not even have to charge for it. This is the way that you can connect with prospects. This is the way that you can get potentially high paying clients excited to work with by reaching out to them and just being of service to them. That by itself.

Remember, we still have to close. We still have to get the client. It’s not that it’s going to go nowhere. You’re going to practice your enrollment skills. All of this is practice, the more you do it the better you get. In the beginning it’s going to be awkward. It’s going to be scary. it’s going to be new. Don’t resist it. Embrace it, practice it, allow yourself to be awkward. You’ll get better and better and better at it.

That really is a secret to success of having a highly successful business and attracting high paying clients and making a very comfortable living, is practicing this and getting better at it so that you can get a client anytime you want. You charge significant fees, fees that your clients have to stretch to pay. You deliver results. That’s what you want to do.

Step five is practice, practice, practice. Learn and practice enrollment skills. These are the five steps for attracting high paying clients excited to work with you. Become an expert; I became an expert in singles in three or four months when I first started out. Step two; choose a specialty and a niche. Step three put together a program for your niche. It can be just a pilot program, just something to start with. You’re going to refine it over time.

Step four, reach out and be of service to the people in your niche in every and any way you can. Free seminars is a great way to do that, meetups is a great way to do that. We provide a lot of value that we don’t charge for. That’s a good thing, that is excellent marketing. I call it marketing by providing value. However, you can’t just do that, you also have to enroll. Remember there’s marketing and then there’s enrollment.
Learn and practice enrollment skills; the enrollment conversation that is in your client getting bonus package. Let’s talk about that for a minute. In your client getting bonus package, I have an email template for you. I recommend that you offer strategy sessions to people not free consultations, whenever you put free in front of something, they’re excited that they don’t have to pay for something. They don’t value it. Why should they pay you for something after that when they can get something for free? It’s a strategy session. It’s not a free consultation. You’re not giving away your services. You are just offering to talk with them at no charge to strategize their situation.

Use the email template, adapt it for your particular specialty and niche. On client getting bonus number two, there is the website registration template. Definitely have your strategy session registration on your website. Realize that you are probably not going to get people cold just go on to your website and signing up for a strategy session. This is something you drive traffic to. This is something you mention when you’re giving a talk in front of a group. You say, “I provide a complimentary strategy session. Please go to my website and sign up. Here’s an example of a registration form for that.”

In the email template and the registration form, there’s language there that you are free to use and adapt that is very, very compelling to people. It’s positive language. It’s benefits oriented language. It’s results oriented language. Client getting bonus package bonus number three is conducting the strategy session; the actual steps. We went over those today in this program. They’re all laid out right here.

My desire is that you practice this because the more you practice it, the better you will get. The more clients you will get. The more successful you will be, the more money that you can charge. For a lot of us when we start out, there is this hump we got to get over. Once we get over that hump, it’s smooth sailing, it becomes easy.

Too many people give up before they get over the hump. They give up and they go get a job. That is my nightmare because the world needs you. You deserve to be highly successful and well-compensated if you deliver results for people, if you transform their lives. You shouldn’t have to give that away. You shouldn’t struggle to make a living if you really are able to help people transform their lives. This is exactly how you can get clients, get hired and charge significant fees.

I really, really hope that you will take this information, run with it and practice it. Don’t be afraid to be awkward and scared in the beginning, that’s where we all start out. That’s everything I’ve got. That’s all the content. Thank you for joining us for this. At this point, I will take your questions and see what’s on your mind.

**Q & A**

Female: Hi. I just want to say a big thank you for doing this. This is really, really helpful. I have a comment with regards to sponsorship. I had an enrollment conversation with somebody
who was saying she didn’t have the money. A couple of days later after we’d had a couple of more conversations she said that she’s been in touch with her Mom. Her Mom offered to pay for the course. It’s just to reiterate what you were saying earlier about sponsorship.

David: Great story, thank you. Yeah this really works, doesn’t it?

Female: Absolutely.

Female: Should we put our prices on our website or would you just leave it until you’re having the enrollment conversation with somebody?

David: Never, never, never put your prices on your website. The reason is that you don’t want to give people a reason to walk away before they even talk to you.

The best time to talk about money is after they’ve gotten in touch with their desire. They’ve gotten all excited about it. After they’ve gotten in touch with their pain and their frustration and what’s gotten in the way. After you have described the solution about how you can help them and how they can get what they want. They’re in a position to evaluate whether or not this is worth it, not before then.

Female: That makes sense.

David: That’s why if somebody were to call you up out of the blue and say, “Hey, I’m thinking about working with you. What do you charge?” You never ever, ever make the first thing that you talk about money because the connection isn’t there yet. The desire and the belief in your program isn’t there yet. I didn’t know this when I started out. When people used to call me and the first thing they asked was, “How much do you charge?” I would tell them. They’d hang up. That’s not effective enrollment at all.

Don’t put your fees on your website ever, ever, ever. Don’t talk about money until the time is right. The time is right after you’ve talked about what it is they want. What’s been getting in the way. You’ve talked about the solution and your program and how you can help them.

Female: Perfect, thank you.

Male: I have been reading a lot of your material. It all makes a whole lot of sense. I’ve been studying the marketing. You’re adding the piece of the enrollment which is really great. I thank you for that.

David: You’re very welcome.

Male: Having just moved into a new community after having been in a practice on the East Coast. My question is what do you think would be the priorities in terms of starting a new practice here in the Seattle community?
David: Do you remember the five steps?

Male: Yeah.

David: I’ll put the slide back up there. The five steps for attracting high paying clients. If you are an expert in a particular area, you have a specialty and a niche, if I was brand new to an area, one of the things that would be easy to do would be to put on seminars. Have a signature seminar, a signature talk around your specialty for your niche. Go ahead and book the community library, talk to groups in the area that might be interesting in having you present your topic to their group. When you are in front of people and you are delivering your signature talk, you will generate prospects. You will generate word of mouth.

After that talk, even people that didn’t even talk to you or go up to you or shake your hand or ask you a question, they’ll walk away. When they have somebody that they know that could benefit from you, they’ll say, “Hey, I saw this guy talk about this. Maybe you should look him up.” You end up getting a lot of buzz and word of mouth. If you’re brand new to a community, that is the most effective, fastest way to connect with pretty much the entire community.

I love the perspective that I want to be a resource to my entire community. How do you put yourself out there to do that? The best way to do that, if you have become an expert, chosen a specialty and niche, you put together a program is to go ahead and be of service in every which way you can. Join the Chamber of Commerce, talk to local practitioners, complementary professionals, people that do the same thing as you do and different things than you do. Talk to non-profits and community groups. Just connect and be of service. Let them know you’re there.

The thing is if you feel called, if this is your mission and you really want to be of service, this is genuine, people get it. They’re very, very attracted to that. When you think about it, it’s almost irresistible because let’s say you’re watching TV, are you going to want a TV show with some boring program or people that don’t have energy for anything or are you going to turn on a show of people that are excited and in action? People love energy. They resonate with energy. You share your passion you will attract people that are really resonating with you. That’s the best way to connect with them is by sharing your passion, every, which way you can. Is that helpful?

Male: Yeah I think so. It’s a good direction for me to go into, yes.

David: Yeah. It’s a great place for you to start. Thank you for the question.

Male: Thank you for your response.

David: Anybody else, anything on your mind before we close? Okay, are we done? Two hours and five minutes, pretty cool. Thank you very, very much for joining us. Please do watch your email inbox for the recording and later on the transcript. Please do download and review the
client getting bonus package. Please do put these strategies into action. It’s getting into action that will get you the results.

These strategies by themselves won’t change your life. What you do with them will change your life. That’s one of my favorite sayings by the way. When you’re in front of a group giving your signature presentation, “This seminar will not change your life. What you do with this information will change your life.” Please do get into action. Please do let me know if I can support you. Thank you for joining us. We will see you next time. Bye for now.