

GETTING HONEST WITH YOURSELF AND GOING FOR IT WITH JULIE PARKER

Hello and welcome back! I am so happy that you're with me for this episode because we are joined by the amazing Julie Parker. She is the founder of the Beautiful You Coaching Academy and also the creator of the Inspired Coach magazine. She is one of Australia's most experienced and in-demand life coaches and business coaches. In this episode, she takes us behind the scenes and shares with us how she's managed to get there, how she's managed to create such a wildly successful business. We talk about so, so much stuff, especially how building a successful business takes time. Success does not happen overnight despite sometimes what certain marketing materials may have us believe. There's so much out there, especially at the moment, that makes us think if we haven't built a business that's making 6-figures basically a day that we've somehow failed. We talk about that in this episode and I really, really like it. I find it really liberating. It was just an inspiring interview so I really hope you love it, too. Also, be sure to stick around right till the end because she shares how one lucky listener is going to win the entire back catalogue of her magazine Inspired Coach, which is amazing. Definitely stick around for that. I just really hope you absolutely love this episode.

Julie, thank you so much for being here. Welcome to the She Means Business podcast!

It's a pleasure, Carrie. Thank you so much for inviting me to be on.

I am so excited to have you here. Not-so-funny note for everyone else, this is our second time recording this interview. The first time, the internet played up. Here we are again. I have the privilege of listening to your story twice, which I cannot complain about because it's so inspiring.

Oh, thank you.

I'm happy we finally get to redo this so we can share it with everyone else. We are going to do this in a different way. This is going to be different the way we did the interview last time, Julie. This time around, we are going to pretend that there is a movie coming out and the movie is called She Means Business starring Julie Parker. Obviously, this movie is going to be amazing. This movie is all about your entrepreneurial journey and how you turned your dreams into reality. First of all, to set the scene for everyone listening, what kind of movie would this be? What kind of vibe would go along with your movie?

Oh my gosh, what a great question. I think I would have to hope that it would be something that was inspiring and uplifting, something that really took people on an amazing journey and hopefully, allow them to leave the cinema thinking about their own capacity and their own amazingness as a human being and maybe what lay ahead for them. So, I would hope it would be uplifting and feel-good.

Oh, I love those kinds of movies — they're my favourite. I love inspiring movies so this sounds like it's going to be a winner. The movie begins and as the first scene starts to play, this is you right back at the beginning of your entrepreneurial journey. What is the story? What is going on? Why did you decide to become an entrepreneur? What did your life look like at that time?

I think that that scene would most definitely show me actually working on the streets of a very impoverished and challenged suburb here in Melbourne, Australia where I am working as a social worker and a youth counsellor with really marginalised and disenfranchised young people. It's going to be pretty tough scene. There are young, pregnant women. There is drug use in teens, lots of kids not in school — really challenging and really difficult. But at the same time, also I would hope the scene would give a sense of there, which is what I had in that time of my life, of there being hope and

some amazing ways forward. I think in this scene, Carrie, I'm going to be looking pretty tired. I'm going to be looking pretty burned out. In driving home from work that day, I'm pretty much going to be complaining to my flatmate about how I love how this work allows me to give so much to other people. I'm not giving to myself anymore and I need to find something different. That's going to be where the seed is planted for me to find another way to work with people. That's going to be the seed absolutely where the journey into entrepreneurship begins.

I like this. I'm literally visualising what you're saying as you're saying it, like watching the movie in my mind. How did you go from being in that position to exploring the entrepreneurial path more? How did that seed begin to grow?

It was actually a colleague of mine at work who —let's just say the very next day after that scene because I know it didn't happen very long afterwards— came to me. This was 17 years ago, Carrie, so we're not talking about a short time here. She came to me and said, "I found this workshop information/evening. It's free. I think we should go and it's about this new thing called coaching." She said, "I'm really interested in it and I've got this funny feeling that you would be really amazing at it." I've never heard of it before. I went along to that information evening not really expecting a great deal. Quite literally, that night changed me because as soon as the woman at the front of the room started to talk about what coaching was that I had that thing that was going to allow me to continue to do amazing work with people, but at a much higher level where I was also going to be able to get back some of my own life instead of working so desperately hard in those really desperate situations with young people, which I'd loved for so long. But eventually, it had gotten to the point where I just felt I couldn't do that level of intensive work anymore.

How did you feel at this point in time? So many people are at that point where they know there's something more they want to do but they haven't taken the leap yet. How did you feel? What kind of thoughts did you have

running through your head? Did you have any doubts or were you just really excited by the opportunity?

I was incredibly excited. You know what? If I think I'd known what was going to unfold in the future, I probably would have been petrified. I didn't know. I've never owned a business before. I've never been to business school. I didn't come from an entrepreneurial family — nothing of that kind. So, this was just something that was totally foreign to me, but I was completely propelled forward by how amazingly excited and inspired I was. If you can imagine, Carrie, 17 years ago, the cost of doing this life coach training course was \$3500. Seventeen years ago, that was a lot of money; \$3500 is a lot of money today. Back in those times on a social worker's wage, I was about to use my credit card very significantly for the very first time in my life. I had always been very conservative with money. I was not a spender sort of girl, but I just knew I had to make this happen. That was what my credit card was for, that I would work, I would be pay it off and it would be OK. I just knew that I had to take this path.

You took the leap, which was obviously a really courageous thing to do. So the work begins. How did this path unfold? What did you do to start following this entrepreneurial path and growing it? Did you find that it was very organic? Did you have a goal in mind of “I want to do this, this and this” or was it “This feels like the right thing, it feels like it could be creating an amazing future for me, so I’m just going to follow it and see where it leads”? How did it all pan out?

It was very much a feeling and very much organic. It wasn't anything that was planned. I think in truth, Carrie, that is really the way that it was for most people who were starting out as coaches back in those days, which makes me sound like a dinosaur. I promise I'm not, but I am probably a little bit older or more experienced than some of the new coaches out there. It was very organic. This was back in the days where there wasn't anything like Instagram or Twitter. Certainly no Snapchat or anything like that that you could engage. There was no podcasting like you and I are doing now. Facebook did exist, but it certainly didn't exist in the way it does today so there was no social media

to do any marketing of any kind. You built by one client by one client by one client. Most often, that was happening through word-of-mouth and it was happening through meeting people. So, I want to be really honest with everyone and say I was far from an overnight success. I ran my small coaching business for many, many years concurrently with part-time work as a counsellor. I worked with some beautiful charities and organisations for a long time. When I eventually stepped into doing my own business full-time, I was both counselling and coaching. Further to that, the coaching just really took over as my big passion and I stepped into doing that full-time, but that didn't happen overnight. That was a process that took about 7-8 years. Unlike a lot of the marketing that we can sometimes see that's out there today —often, I feel they are targeting very vulnerable new coaches— selling them the dream that they can create this 6-figure business seemingly overnight, none of that existed and I was glad that that didn't exist. That's one of the changes in this industry that I've seen that I don't like. There have been a lot of changes that have been incredible. I'm so proud to be a part of this personal development industry and the coaching industry for such a long time, but there have been some shifts and changes that are not the best and others that have been incredible. I guess that's the same for all industries, but it didn't happen overnight.

You touched on how these changes with people selling a dream, I suppose, become a coach and make 6-figures overnight pretty much. That's how it feels a lot of the times when you see Facebook ads popping up. What do you think about that? Do you think that people can make that happen? It seems a bit too good to be true when I see things like that. I'm like, "Really?" I know how hard you have to work to really turn your ideas and dreams into reality. What do you think?

Usually, the saying goes that if something is too good to be true, it most often is. I think that is definitely the case. Over my career in life and business coaching and now being a trainer of life coaches, I have worked one-on-one and in groups with thousands of coaches from all over the world. I can honestly tell everyone listening that I have known out of those thousands of people one coach who launched her coaching business and

had such an incredible response to it that she quit her full-time role the following week. However, the backstory to that was that she had a highly successful blog that she had written for every single day for 18 months — every day. Not just once a week or even twice a week, but every single day. She was an incredibly astute user of social media. Through her passion for writing, building community and connection, she had built up this amazing tribe that basically was waiting for her. As soon as she launched her coaching packages and business in her area of speciality and expertise, people were lining up at the door. She already had a mailing list. She had a social media following. She's the only one that I've known that has been able to do something like that, but the backstory was she did what so many people don't do until they launch their website. She had already been working so hard. Carrie, this business about becoming an amazing overnight success is just really not true. I think that what's happening in many circumstances is that people who are marketing in that way are preying upon the pain points and the insecurities and concerns with new coaches, which is "How do I get more clients and how do I make more money?" When people come along with these enormous promises and —sometimes, they can have a glamorous photo shoot to go with it and sell the lifestyle that go with it— it's incredibly seductive. But my genuine lived personal and business experience is that any business, including a coaching business, that is going to have long-term sustainability and impact for the coach who is the owner of that business, the clients they are going to come into contact with, and the difference they are trying to make in the world is not going to happen overnight. It is something that is going to take months, and without question 1, 2, 3 and even up to 5 years of consistent hard work before someone is going to be able to reach the point that is being promised through those marketing dreams.

I think it's really good to talk about this because sometimes, when you look around and you see different marketing which makes you feel like you should have figured it out and within the first 3 months, you should already be making thousands and thousands, it can leave people feeling so bad that somehow they failed themselves because they haven't manage to

make it happen. My reality is the same thing. It took me a good 3-4 years to get FEA to where I wanted it to be in terms of financial success. I think you have to build the foundation. Throughout the first few years when I was just working at it and it wasn't generating lots and lots of revenue, I feel like I just had to keep on going. Back then, there was some kind of online marketing that was selling the get-rich-quick schemes which have always existed. I didn't really see it as much as I do today in social media. Back then, if I was seeing it all the time, I'd be like "Bloody hell, what's wrong with me? Why is it taking me so long?" It's good to joke about it — it's refreshing.

I think it's a really, really good thing to talk about because you know what, Carrie? There are so many people that are feeling the way exactly as you described. They're thinking to themselves, "Hang on a second. I've had my business for 9, 10 or 12 months. This person is saying that I should have already be seeing 50 clients and I should be making this." If we're not careful, if we allow our egos to twist things around, it can make us feel really bad. We can fall into this trap of comparison-itis, "I'm not as far ahead as everybody else" and all sorts of things. Unfortunately, the really terrible irony of that is that thing makes the person susceptible to purchasing something like that because they're externalising it and they're thinking "This person has the answer for me." One of the things that I always tell my coaches all the time is to never, ever, ever forget that you can have the fanciest website in the world, you can pay tens of thousands of dollars to work with a business coach and you can get an incredibly sophisticated sales funnel together, but what it all boils down to is if you're not actually a great coach and you're not actually really focused on basic things such as your communication, how you listen and how you hold space and how you work on your own stuff, then none of those things will make a difference. Don't always look outside of yourself. Yes, you've got to ask for help. Yes, you should engage professional support when you need it, but try not to make purchasing decisions based on anything where you're telling yourself "I need that because I'm not good enough."

I love that. Obviously, you've been doing this for 17 years now. What have been the key moments throughout those 17 years? What would be the key highlights of this movie? I also want to ask has there been any drama along the way. Any twists and turns that you didn't really expect to deal with or anything like that? If we took an overview of this movie, what would be the key things going on?

Well, I think the big key thing would be me crying on the bathroom floor just before I launched what is my business now, which is the Beautiful You Coaching Academy. That was when I made the step from being somebody who was coaching a lot of coaches who had come to me because I managed to build my business up really successfully. We kind of reached this inspiration peak in the movie and that was great. Then, I made this decision to really go crazy launch this academy never having this corporate that there were people that were looking to train to become a coach in a heart-centred and beautiful way, which is how I worked with my clients. But Carrie, before launching that academy, I had enormous doubts. I worked so hard, written a manual and a workbook for the course that was over 40,000 words — just huge, a massive undertaking. The night before I was to press live on that website, honestly, I think I would have actually paid somebody else to take it off my hands. I felt that nervous and that sick about the whole thing. I kept downplaying it for myself, pacing up and down this bathroom and at one point in time, lying down on the cold tiles because my face was getting so hot from the crying and just hysterics I found myself in. I kept saying to myself, "It's OK. If you only ever do it once, that's fine. If nobody wants to do it or only a few people want to do it, maybe you'll just offer it one time. Yes, you're going to lose money on this website. Yes, there's been a lot of time invested in it, but you know what? It's OK. Just have a go." Eventually, I worked up the courage and at 6 o'clock that following morning, I said to my web developer, "OK, it's time to go live." Of course, so often what happens to so many of us is that the perceived fear of what we think is going to happen is so much more acute and worse than anything that happens in real life. That is exactly what happened. I was so blessed that it was so incredibly well-received. We're now in our 5th year and I think where the movie would go is exactly what I love the most of all. It would turn away

from me and it would no longer be about me. It would actually begin to focus on all of these incredible coaches from all around the world who are now building their own little empires and their own contributions and contributing to their own families and their own clients in their own way. That's exactly the way that I want it.

I love that. It's really nice, isn't it? I feel like there's this massive movement of people waking up and following their dreams and just making such a positive impact in the world. It's so nice, isn't it?

Oh my gosh, it is such a beautiful time to be alive — it really is. I know that in different countries around the world, there is a lot of political and economic turmoil and we can't ignore those things. But those things also awaken the exact people that you were just describing. If ever there was a time that the world needed dreamers, believers, doers, achievers that are driven by their heart and driven by service and driven by making an impact, it's now.

Yeah, I couldn't agree more — so true. Obviously, throughout this session, you've given us some great tips for coaches. I didn't want to leave this movie without a final amazing tip from you. It didn't actually have to be for people who want to be coaches because obviously, you have worked with other people throughout the years. What would be your top tip for anyone who's looking to get out of their own way and make their dreams come true?

If someone was to ask me this question on any given day, I could probably give about 10 different answers. I'm going to go with my gut and intuition and the first one that came into my head when you asked it, and that is if you really want to create an incredible life and path for yourself, you cannot really do that and expect to be happy and get the results that you want to get if you go in halfway. One of the things that I see people do all the time is, for example, they'll say something like "I want to change careers because I know and really feel within myself that's going to make me happier" or "I want to start a business" or "I really want to move and live in an exotic country." What they do is they

change careers, but instead of changing their careers to what they really, really want to do, which is something in the music industry or they want to run a bed-and-breakfast, they just make a sideways change. If someone wants to start a business, what they do is they start a business that they think is socially acceptable to their family and their friends who are all placing enormous pressure on them because suddenly, they're worried about this person letting go of the security of a regular income. Or somebody says that they want to move to an exotic country but instead, what they do is maybe move states or they move to a country that's not nearly as challenging and eye-opening and potentially transformational and awakening as what they really want. If you want to do something, just get really honest with yourself about what it is that you really want and make sure that you go for that. Don't be half-bottomed. I don't want to swear on you, Carrie, but don't do that because all that you will find is that you will invest so much time, energy, effort, heart and soul into something that is only going to take you halfway there, if that. And then, you're going to be upset with yourself along the way. You're going to go "Hang on a second. Why isn't this working? Why aren't I getting the results and the feelings and the achievements that I wanted?" If you're going to do it, do it.

Yeah, I love that. It's such good advice. You can't just go half in on your dreams; you have to go in all the way.

Yeah.

I love that. That's a fantastic ending to this epic movie. I would definitely go and watch it.

Thank you so much. I would like Melissa McCarthy to play me, if I may just add that in the end. I love Melissa McCarthy. I think she's an amazing comedic actress and I have a wicked sense of humour.

If you had put comedy at the beginning, I would have made you tell us a joke.

No, I'm terrible at telling jokes, but I love humour and people who make me laugh. I think she also does inspiration really well. I love her. That would be who I would want to play me.

I love her, too. She's brilliant and you're brilliant, too. I think that what you're creating is amazing. It's a movement of women around the world who are doing the most positive things. A lot of it started with you. You've helped those people in their journeys and I think it's absolutely incredible. Thank you so much for what you do. Thank you so much for sharing your movie with us. I think it should be made into an actual movie so everyone else can see it and get inspired and think, "Yes, I'm going to go for my dreams and live an incredible life." Thank you so much for joining us, I really appreciate it.

It's a pleasure, Carrie. It's been enormous fun.

Also, for everyone listening, if you leave a comment over on the blog, there is going to be an amazing giveaway. Julie, do you want to say a little bit about what one person is going to win?

That would be my pleasure. At the Beautiful You Coaching Academy, Carrie, we have an amazing free magazine that we release every month. It's called Inspired Coach. Now, I think we are just about moving into our 45th issue of that magazine. Back copies are only available for purchase. For one lucky winner, we're actually going to give you the entire back catalogue. Woohoo! That is going to be some beautiful reading, amazing articles in there, all about how to help you become a better coach and build your business in a really authentic and soulful way.

I love that. That's such an amazing giveaway. All you need to do to be in with a chance of winning is head over to the blog, leave a comment and let us know with your biggest take-away has been from this episode. We'll be picking the winner very soon so definitely be on the lookout. We'll reply

to your comment if you have won. Julie, thank you again so much. You are so inspiring. Go and check out Julie's website. All the details are going to be on the blog in the show notes. Definitely get involved in all of that. I really hope you have enjoyed this episode and I will see you soon for another episode of She Means Business.